

SHAHNAMA STUDIES

III

The Reception of the *Shahnama*

Edited by

Gabrielle van den Berg & Charles Melville



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Shahnama Studies III

Studies in Persian Cultural History

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Charles Melville (*Cambridge University*)
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Cover illustration: Rustam kills the Demon Barkhiyas, *Shahnama*, ms. Dorn 333, folio 400 recto
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Abbreviations

AIIT	Ancient India and Iran Trust, Cambridge
B	Ye.E. Bertel's <i>et al.</i> 's edition of the <i>Shahnama</i> , 9 vols. (Moscow, 1960–71)
BL	British Library, London
BM	British Museum, London
BNF	Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris
BOD	Bodleian Library, Oxford
CBL	Chester Beatty Library, Dublin
CUL	University Library, Cambridge
DS	Sayyid Muhammad Dabir-Siyaqi's edition of the <i>Shahnama</i> , 6 vols. (Tehran, 1335/1956)
FTZ	Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge
I.O.	India Office (mss. now held in the British Library)
IOM	Institute of Oriental Manuscripts, St Petersburg
JRL	John Rylands University Library of Manchester
KM	Djalal Khaleghi-Motlagh <i>et al.</i> 's edition of the <i>Shahnama</i> , 8 vols. (Costa Mesa & New York, 1987–2008)
LACMA	Los Angeles County Museum of Art
M	Jules Mohl's edition of the <i>Shahnama</i> , 7 vols. (Paris, 1838–78); Persian text only, reprinted with continuous pagination, and Mohl's preface translated into Persian by Jahangir Afkari, 4 vols. (Tehran 1345/1971, and subsequent reprintings)
MET	Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
Munich	Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich
NLR	National Library of Russia, St Petersburg
NYPL	New York Public Library
RA	Reza Abbasi Museum, Tehran
RAS	Royal Asiatic Society, London
SNP	Shahnama Project, Cambridge, digital index: http://shahnama.caret.cam.ac.uk
Suppl. pers.	Supplément persan, BNF
TIEM	Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi, Istanbul
TSMK	Topkapı Saray Museum Library, Istanbul

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Shāhnāme”, in *International Shāhnāme Conference: The second millennium. Conference volume*, ed. Forogh Hashabeiky (Uppsala, 2014); “Rashīd al-Dīn and the *Shāhnāme*h”, in *The Mongols and post-Mongol Asia. Studies in Honour of David O. Morgan. JRAS* 26 (2016); and “The *Shāhnāme*h manuscript tradition: The next 1000 years?”, in *Firdawsii Millennium Indicum: Proceedings of the Shahnama Millenary Seminar, The K R Cama Oriental Institute, Mumbai 8–9 January, 2011*, ed. Burzine Waghmar & Sunil Sharma (Mumbai, 2016).

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Raya Shani

has been teaching since 1997 Islamic art and architecture at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the School of Architecture at the Bezal'el Academy of the Arts in Jerusalem, with a two-year break for a visiting professorship at the departments of Art History and Near Eastern Studies in UC Berkeley. She has published two monographs on Shi'i concepts in Persian art: *A monumental manifestation of the Shī'ite faith in late twelfth-century Iran: The case of the Gunbad-i 'Alawiyān, Hamadān* (Oxford Studies in Islamic Art 11, 1996); and "Alī b. Abī Ṭālib—The Lion of God: Iconographical study of the lion image in Shi'i-inspired Mi'rāj paintings", in *Survey of Persian Art* 18, ed. Abbas Daneshvari (Costa Mesa, CA, 2005).

Maria Szuppe

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Gabrielle van den Berg

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the *Shahnama* of Ferdowsi'. In 2016, the same organisation awarded her with a 'VICI' grant for her research project 'Turks, Texts and Territory: Imperial ideology and cultural production in Central Eurasia'. Her publications include several studies on aspects of the Sistani epic cycle, including an edition of the *Shabrangnama*, together with Abolfazl Khatibi (Tehran, 2017).

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Marjolijn van Zutphen

obtained her Ph.D. at Leiden University with her dissertation *Farāmarz, the Sistāni Hero: Texts and traditions of the Farāmarznāme and the Persian epic cycle* (subsequently published, Leiden, 2014). Recently, she conducted research on the Persian traditions surrounding Alexander the Great (Eskandar) as part of a project about the Afro-Asiatic Alexander Cycle supervised by Faustina Doufikaar-Aerts at VU University Amsterdam. She has co-edited (with Abolfazl Khatibi) a critical edition of one of the poems of the Epic Cycle: *Faramarznama-yi buzurg* (Tehran, 2016), of which text she has made an English translation (Leiden, 2017).

Laura Weinstein

is Ananda Coomaraswamy Curator of South Asian and Islamic art at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Since arriving at the MFA in 2009, she has curated several exhibitions of paintings and sculptures drawing on the museum's Islamic and South Asian collections, including "Pure Souls: The Jain path to perfection", and "Sacred Pages: Conversations about the Qur'an". In 2011 she led the reinstallation of the museum's superb South and Southeast Asian collections. More recently she has authored *Ink, silk & gold: Islamic art from the MFA, Boston* (2015) which accompanies an exhibition of the highlights of this

collection. Laura is also a scholar and ardent lover of Persian manuscripts, particularly those produced in the Deccan (India). Among her publications on this topic are essays in *The visual world of Muslim India: The art, culture and society of the Deccan in the early modern era*, edited by Laura E. Parodi (2014), and in *Sultans of Deccan India, 1500–1700: Opulence and fantasy*, edited by Navina Najat Haidar and Marika Sardar (2015). A further Deccani publication, co-authored with Phillip Wagoner, appears in *The Companion to Islamic art and architecture*, edited by Finbarr Barry Flood and Gülru Necipoğlu (2017).

Kumiko Yamamoto

received her PhD from the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London with a thesis on “Storytelling and Poetry: The Oral Background of Persian Epics” in 2000 (published as *The oral background of Persian Epics: Storytelling and poetry*, Leiden, 2003). She also studied the cinema of Abbas Kiarostami at the Culture and Representation Course, Department of Interdisciplinary Cultural Studies, Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, the University of Tokyo (2003–2005). She taught English at the University of Tokyo (2006–2008). She then became a Corresponding Fellow at the Institute for Iranian Studies, the Georg-August University Göttingen (2009–2016). Her research work focuses on the interaction of orality and writing, with a special reference to *naqqali*, the *Shahnama* of Firdausi, and the “Longer” *Barzunama*. It also includes film studies with a focus on Abbas Kiarostami. Currently, she is translating poems by Abbas Kiarostami into Japanese.

Note on Citations of the *Shahnama*

The contributors refer to different editions of the *Shahnama*, which are indicated here by an abbreviation (see above). Although Jules Mohl's classic edition of the Persian text and facing French translation remains valuable, it is cited here with reference to one of the two main reprints of the Persian text alone. The first, published in 4 vols. in Tehran (1345/1966), included a translation of Mohl's preface by Jahangir Afkari. The other, with an introduction by Muhammad Amin Riyahi, was published in 3 vols. (2nd printing, Tehran, 1370/1991). Both have continuous pagination across the volumes, but the page numbering differs. None of the four standard editions cited give a cumulative line number for the whole work, which is divided into 50 discrete chapters. These chapters were assigned an alpha-numerical designation by Fritz Wolff, *Glossar zu Firdosis Schahname* (Berlin, 1935, vi-vii), which was followed in the edition of Dabir-Siyaqi, and retained in Kumiko Yamamoto's analysis of the text (*The oral background of Persian epics: Storytelling and poetry*, Leiden, 2003, xiv–xviii).

In general, where the discussion focuses on a single episode, reference is made to the edition and line number (verse, or *bait*) of that chapter (e.g. M, 1234, indicates Mohl's edition, verse 1234). Reference may also be given to the chapter, in case of ambiguity, either by the Wolff alpha-numeric designation (12d, 13f, etc.) or by the chapter (reign) title (Siyavush, Davazdah rukh, etc.). Where the discussion ranges over the whole work, citation is made by edition, volume number, page number, line (verse) number (e.g. B, v, 86, vv. 10–11, indicates Bertel's, vol. v, p. 86, lines 10–11).

It should be noted that a line of text in the manuscripts of the *Shahnama* generally contains two or sometimes three lines (verses, *bait*) of the poem, and that each verse consists of two half lines (*misra*). The use of the term *bait* or verse (v., vs.) is intended to avoid uncertainty over the meaning of 'line' in any given instance.

Introduction

On the occasion of the millennium of Firdausi's *Shahnama* in 2010, numerous conferences, meetings and exhibitions were organised in different parts of the world. These events and the large number of publications that followed showed the continuing vibrance of the *Shahnama* tradition and gave a new impetus to the study of the *Shahnama*. A major catalyst in the *Shahnama* scholarship of the last decades has been the Cambridge Shahnama Project, launched in 1999 by Charles Melville at the University of Cambridge. Amongst the many conferences organised under the auspices of this project, two were dedicated to the broad theme of the reception of the *Shahnama* and co-organised with the project 'The Persian Epic Cycle and the *Shahnama* of Ferdowsi', funded by the Netherlands Organisation of Scientific Research (NWO). The first of these two joined conferences was held from 13–15 December 2007 at Pembroke College, Cambridge. The papers of this conference were published in 2012.¹ The second conference took place on 8 and 9 January 2009 in Leiden, at the University Library of Leiden University. The present volume contains papers presented at the Leiden conference and a number of additional papers on the topic of the reception of the *Shahnama*, a theme that is by no means exhausted.

The contributions in this volume are grouped in four sections and focus on different aspects of the hugely successful afterlife of the *Shahnama*. In the centuries following its creation, the *Shahnama* grew to become an icon of Persian culture, serving as a source of inspiration for literature in its broadest sense, history and historiography, as well as various art forms. As a normative text in Persian history and literature, the *Shahnama* became a living epic poem, subject to change and adaptation. This can be witnessed not only in the *Shahnama* manuscript tradition, which covers many centuries, but also in the oral tradition connected to the *Shahnama*.

The adaptability of the *Shahnama* and the fluidity of its contents are clearly demonstrated by the phenomenon of later epics, discussed in the first section of this volume. The term 'later epics' is broadly applied to the epic material that is believed to have been added to the *Shahnama* at a later stage. Until quite recently, the majority of these later epics remained unpublished and were accessible only through the study of individual manuscripts. At present, an increasing number of later epics is available in printed editions.

1 *Shahnama Studies II. The Reception of Firdausi's Shahnama*, ed. Charles Melville & Gabrielle van den Berg (Leiden-Boston 2012).

One of these later epics is the *Banu Gushaspnama*, discussed by Marjolijn van Zutphen, who shows in her contribution how the *Banu Gushaspnama* figures in a voluminous 19th-century *Shahnama* manuscript, now kept in the British Library as Or. 2926. This manuscript is famous for the sheer number of additional materials it contains and can be seen as the culmination of a process that started already many centuries before. In the predominantly male world of the *Shahnama* and the related later epics, Rustam's daughter Banu Gushasp takes a separate and unique position.

The majority of the later epics circle around the progeny of the central figure of the *Shahnama*, Rustam, and can thus be seen as an extension of the Sistan cycle in the *Shahnama*. Demons are amongst the many challenges Rustam and other *Shahnama* heroes have to face. The progeny of demons figuring in Firdausi's *Shahnama* can also be the material for later additions to the *Shahnama*, as Charles Melville demonstrates in his exhaustive study on the hitherto little explored story of Barkhiyas Div, embedded within the episode of Bizhan and Manizha and acting as a link to the previous episode of Akvan Div. His contribution presents his findings on the text and illustrations pertaining to Barkhiyas, son of Akvan Div, whose story is already found in the 14th-century edition of the *Shahnama* made by Hamd-Allah Mustaufi.

In volume and in frequency, the story of Barkhiyas is an example of a 'smaller' later epic, certainly in comparison to the extensive tradition surrounding Barzu (or Burzu), the grandson of Rustam by his son Suhrab. Kumiko Yamamoto focuses in her contribution on Barzu in the oral tradition as recorded in the *Haft lashkar* and compares the storylines found therein to what is by all accounts the largest later epic, the stand-alone *Barzunama* manuscript kept in the Bibliothèque Nationale. Gabrielle van den Berg also deals with the figure Barzu and discusses his role in the oral tradition of present-day Uzbekistan.

Maria Szuppe brings to light new material on another member of Rustam's family, his great-grandson Shahriyar, who is the son of Barzu. She has worked extensively on the *Shahriyarnama* manuscript from the collection of Sir Harold Bailey, now part of the Ancient India and Iran Trust in Cambridge. Her contribution sheds light on the complicated codicological history of this epic, attributed variously to the Ghaznavid poets Farrukhi and Mukhtari. The Cambridge manuscript, which, unlike the other two witnesses to the text, is complete, permits an answer to the question of whether they are all the same work, or two different epics with the same name.

The second section of the volume is devoted to the *Shahnama* in later contexts. From the 13th century onwards, there is ample evidence that the *Shahnama* starts to play a role in the legitimizing enterprise of new rulers, often of Turkic descent, who sought a connection with the ruling elites of the

past. With its strong wisdom-literature component, the *Shahnama* served as a manual for kingly ethics and functioned therefore also as a mirror for princes. Princes and rulers were eager to forge a lasting relationship between themselves and the *Shahnama* by having royal manuscripts produced in their name. The rich *Shahnama* manuscripts commissioned by Timurid rulers are outstanding examples of this. Also in Persian historiography, references to the *Shahnama* abound. Michele Bernardini seeks to offer new perspectives on the presence of the kings of the *Shahnama* in historical chronicles of the Timurid period, concluding that the work was effectively obsolete by the 15th century, but nevertheless continued to be useful if popularized for propagandistic purposes. Bernardini elaborates on the theory of the historicizing of myth, making reference to Ibn Khaldun's celebrated meeting with Timur and Euhemerus of Messina's *Sacred History*.

How important the *Shahnama* was for rulers is demonstrated also by the existence of the office of *shehnameci* (*Shahnama* reciter) in the Ottoman Empire. Fatma Sinem Eryılmaz presents an in-depth study of the *Sulaiman-nama* by 'Arif, the *shehnameci* of Sultan Süleyman, who modelled his work after Firdausi's *Shahnama*. In her contribution, she highlights the importance of the *Sulaiman-nama* as an historical source and she discusses its position on the intersection of literature and history, thereby tackling the rather rigid approach to texts such as these in previous research. As a court production, necessarily approved by the ruler himself, the *Sulaiman-nama* has the merit of elucidating the official attitude to the events narrated, even if it is not an independent record.

An illustrated Turkish manuscript produced at the Ottoman court and inspired by the *Shahnama* is the topic of Tülün Değirmenci's contribution and deals with another strand of the *Shahnama* tradition at the Ottoman court. Her analysis of the *Şehnâme-i Türki*, an illustrated Turkish manuscript produced in the early 17th century, illuminates the courtly reception of a storyteller's 'translation' of the *Shahnama* as well as the work of the narrator or panegyrist himself, Meddâh Medhî.

Raya Shani explores the iconographical impact of the *Shahnama* on an illustrated 15th-century manuscript copy of Ibn Husam's *Khavaran-nama*. She provides a full analysis of the various ways Ibn Husam's protagonist 'Ali has been depicted in this manuscript and connects these to contemporary depictions of *Shahnama* kings and heroes. The illustrator, Farhad, working in the Shirazi tradition, sought visual models in the iconographic traditions of the period, in the same way that the author, Ibn Husam, modelled his text on Firdausi's *Shahnama*, transferring Rustam's heroic qualities onto the Shi'i Imam 'Ali and his divinely-ordained role to champion Islam and defeat the unbelievers.

The textual studies by Christine van Ruymbeke and Alyssa Gabbay make up the third section of the volume. Christine van Ruymbeke meticulously unravels the different layers of the story Khusrau and Shirin by elucidating patterns of intertextuality in connection with rewriting, authorship and plagiarism. Alyssa Gabbay offers an exciting new feminist reading of the *Shahnama*, disclosing the agency of rebellious daughters in the *Shahnama*.

The fourth section, Art history and manuscript studies, contains three fascinating studies on very different topics, centred around artistic objects and individual manuscripts. Firuza Abdullaeva (Melville) presents a detailed study of two hitherto unpublished lustre tiles from the Ilkhanid period with *Shahnama* verses, one referring to the story of Zahhak and the other to the story of Bahram Gur. Taking these tiles as a point of departure, she goes into the dynamics of Takht-i Sulayman as an example of Perso-Mongolian cosmopolitanism.

Laura Weinstein sheds new light on courtly production in the Deccan in a thorough analysis of a dispersed and little-studied illustrated *Shahnama* manuscript, produced at the Deccani court of Bijapur around 1610. She discusses the locality of the illustrations by comparing the illustrations of the *Shahnama* manuscript with another Bijapuri manuscript from the same period, the *Pem Nem*.

The Timurid ruler Baysunghur, responsible for a new and soon authoritative introduction to text of the *Shahnama*, commissioned two *Shahnama* manuscripts. In contrast to the famous Golestan Palace Library manuscript copy, the *Shahnama* manuscript copy for Baysunghur kept in the Malek Library has hardly received any scholarly attention. Shiva Mihan offers a new and critical analysis of the text and illustrations of the Malek Library copy in relation to the Golestan Palace Library copy, in doing so not only confirming the correct attribution of the text to Baysunghur's atelier, but also suggesting firm grounds for attributing the two illustrations at the end of the text to the late 19th century.

If a common thread needs to be singled out from the varied contributions presented in this third volume of *Shahnama Studies* in the series Studies in Persian Cultural History, it is probably the overwhelming scope and vivacity of the *Shahnama* tradition in a variety of textual and visual media, encompassing a geographical space stretching from Bijapur to Istanbul and a time-span of seven centuries. Every new manuscript of the *Shahnama* is itself part of revealing the reception of the epic, as is each new interpolation of 'improvement' added by later authors and responses to his narratives by later poets. So too are the continuing quotation of Firdausi's verses in religious epics and prose chronicles, demonstrating the extent to which his language and his didactic reflections on rulership, fate and human relationships left a permanent mark on Persian culture.

Due to various circumstances, it took a long time to prepare this volume. We are extremely grateful to the contributors for their patience and unfailing commitment. We would also like to thank the Scaliger Institute at Leiden University Library, the Leiden University Fund (LUF), the Leiden Institute for Area Studies and the Stichting Oosters Instituut for financially supporting the conference that stood at the basis of the present volume. The contributions in this volume have been edited by both Charles Melville and myself. We hope that this third *Shahnama Studies* volume to appear in the Brill series 'Studies in Persian Cultural History' will prove a worthy continuation of the previous volumes that came out in 2006 and 2012.

Gabrielle van den Berg

Leiden University, with Charles Melville, Pembroke College, Cambridge,
Leiden, June 2017

PART 1

The Reception of the Shahnama: Later Epics



Banu Gushasp in the *Shahnama*: A Case Study of the British Library Ms. Or. 2926 and the Interpolated *Banu Gushaspnama*

Marjolijn van Zutphen

It is well known that Firdausi's *Shahnama* is a far from static text. As a result of a millennium long copying tradition, the numerous manuscripts of the poem came to present a large number of variant readings. Many texts include a wide variation of interpolations. These additional passages or stories are worthwhile examining to gain an idea of the *Shahnama*'s reception. They show how the poem's contents could fluctuate under the influence of external factors. For instance, a considerable number of interpolations in the *Shahnama* consists of poems from the Persian epic cycle.¹ Whilst these later epics were composed in imitation and continuation of the *Shahnama*, their subject material, in turn, caused Firdausi's poem to be reshaped.

One *Shahnama* manuscript that presents a particularly interesting case is the London British Library ms. Or. 2926 (hereafter, BL). It contains roughly the poem's first half, up to the accession of Luhrasp. The text was copied in Shiraz and is dated 1246–49/1830–33. The book measures about 42.5 by 29 cm and has 349 folios. The text of each page is made up of 25 lines and divided into six columns, so that there are three distiches per line. Each rubric, written in red and framed, is placed in the middle column and has a height of two lines. The manuscript is illustrated, but the majority of the spaces intended for miniatures remain unfilled. Its sequel is ms. Or. 2976: this manuscript is of a similar layout, albeit with 275 folios less voluminous, and was completed in 1252/1836. Together, these two volumes present a *Shahnama* that contains a large number of interpolations. According to Rieu, the extraneous matter in ms. Or. 2926 alone amounts to some 20,000 distiches.²

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- 1 François de Blois, "Epics", 475–76, briefly describes the Persian epic cycle and Zabih-Allah Safa, *Hamasa-sara'i dar Iran*, 283–340, discusses many epics separately and at greater length.
 - 2 Charles Rieu, *Supplement to the catalogue of the Persian manuscripts in the British Museum*, 129–31, no. 196 (ms. Or. 2926) and 131–32, no. 197 (ms. Or. 2976), mentions the extraneous distiches at 129.

Much of the interpolated matter in ms. Or. 2926 (BL), consists of later epics.³ The final one, featuring a daughter of Rustam, is the *Banu Gushaspnama*. Compared with this later epic in its separate form, the interpolated one of BL is considerably shorter. It in large part is a retelling, with a number of variants, of the separate poem's final fourth part. So far as is known, this interpolated version of the *Banu Gushaspnama* does not appear in any other manuscript,⁴ which makes it unique.

In addition, BL includes four much shorter interpolated passages that pertain to Banu Gushasp. Contrary to the interpolated epic, these passages are known to exist in a number of other manuscripts. This is especially remarkable, as Banu Gushasp is not part of Firdausi's original storyline. This article serves to demonstrate how, under the influence of a particular poem from the Persian epic cycle, i.e. the *Banu Gushaspnama*, a later epic character could be introduced into the *Shahnama* and in this manner increase this work's, already large, emphasis on Rustam's family.

The Separate *Banu Gushaspnama*

The *Banu Gushaspnama*, as a separate poem, is relatively short. In the critical edition produced by Karachi, it counts just 1,032 verses.⁵ Although both its author and its date of composition are unknown, the poem's style as well as its vocabulary, which is relatively free of Arabic influences, have caused

3 Ibid., 129–32, lists nine extraneous stories for ms. Or. 2926 and two more for ms. Or. 2976. See also Gabrielle van den Berg, "Demons in the Persian epic cycle: The *div* Shabrang in the Leiden *Shabranama* and in *Shahnama* manuscripts", 36, for the list.

4 L.T. Gjuzaljan & M.M. Djakonov, *Rukopisi Shakh-name v leningradskikh sobranijach*, 97–99; the St Petersburg State University *Shahnama* ms. MO 38 contains two interpolations surrounding Banu Gushasp. The catalogue's brief descriptions of the two passages imply that they both differ greatly from the ones discussed in this article and although the second interpolation of ms. MO 38 should occur in the same section of the *Shahnama* as the interpolated *Banu Gushaspnama* in BL, it is not nearly as long.

5 *Banugushasp nama*, ed. Karachi, 55–129, is based on the complete Paris, Bibliothèque nationale [BNF], ms. Suppl. pers. 498 (India, 18th c.?: ff. 145v–173v, 986 vs.). This text is collated with another complete version, the second story of the lithographed book entitled *Faramarznama*, ed. Rustam pur-i Bahram Surush-i Tafti, 25–78, 1038 vs., as well as with the Oxford Bodleian Library [BOD] mss Pers. c. 26 (ff. 167v–173v), Ouseley 28 (ff. 44r–66r) and Ouseley 30 (ff. 21r–40r), which are all three defective and of unknown place and date of production. Karachi has also made use of Strasbourg, Public Library, ms. 4720, a 19th-century copy Hermann Zotenberg made of the Paris ms.

its production to be estimated as the late 11th or more likely the early 12th century AD.⁶

The *Banu Gushaspnama* is the only poem from the Persian epic cycle of which the eponymous protagonist is a female warrior. It is made up of four different stories about Rustam's daughter Banu Gushasp. She is presented on the one hand as an eager huntress, a vigorous warrior and a skilful swordswoman, and on the other, as a stunning beauty who causes men to fall head over heels in love. The following summary of the separate *Banu Gushaspnama* serves to give a general impression of its four stories and is told in greater detail only where this is relevant for the following discussion.

The poem lacks any preliminary verses and opens with the birth of Rustam's son Faramarz. He soon grows tall and strong and is entrusted by his father to his older sister Banu Gushasp to teach him the skills of hunting and riding. For these excursions, she dons a man's armour and hides her hair in a helmet. The first story sees the two siblings becoming involved in a fight with their father, who has disguised himself in order to play a trick on his children, as well as test their skills. When, after a lengthy struggle, Banu Gushasp's sword accidentally tears her father's veil, his identity is revealed and all ends well.

The second story takes place on the hunting plains on the border with Turan, where Banu Gushasp and Faramarz encounter the Turanian army led by Afrasiyab's son Shida. The moment Banu Gushasp takes off her helmet and reveals her radiant beauty, the prince instantly falls in love. Back at his father's court, Shida's lovesickness causes a Chinese army leader by the name of Tamartash to boast that he will go and deal with Banu Gushasp. But as soon as he sees her face, this warrior also succumbs to her beauty and declares his love, much to the annoyance of Banu Gushasp, who in response cleaves Tamartash lengthwise in two.

After this, rumours of Banu Gushasp's heroism and beauty spread all the way to India and incite three Indian princes to travel to Sistan to joust for her hand. In personal confrontations, Banu Gushasp makes quick work of two of the princes, so that the third one scampers off.

The fourth story, taking up just under a quarter of the *Banu Gushaspnama*, consists of 231 verses.⁷ It begins with Kay Kavus sitting in his garden at a banquet together with over a thousand Iranian heroes. At a certain point, the conversation turns to the subject of Banu Gushasp and, flushed with wine, each warrior boasts how he is the best of all men and therefore the most deserving of Rustam's daughter. Soon, they all start fighting and the banquet turns

6 Djalal Khaleghi-Motlagh, "Gošasb Bānu", 170, and *Banugushasp nama*, ed. Karachi, 13–17.

7 *Banugushasp nama*, ed. Karachi, 114–29, vv. 802–1032.

into a battle-scene filled with wounded men. To deal with this turmoil, Kay Kavus sends for Rustam, who is away on a hunting trip. Rustam decides to solve the problem of who may marry Banu Gushasp by setting the heroes a trial: he spreads out a large carpet upon which he seats four hundred warriors and when he pulls out the carpet from underneath them, the hero who remains seated will prove to be suitable as his son-in-law. All four hundred men are thrown off the carpet, except Giv, who stays firmly put.

Everyone rejoices and the party moves to Zabulistan, where after a seven days' banquet Giv and Banu Gushasp are married. The bride literally has no say in the matter, for the entire fourth story gives her no spoken lines. She does, however, come into action: after bride and groom have retired to their private quarters, Giv presumptuously makes his overtures and tries to corner his wife, but Banu Gushasp resists and overpowers him, ties up his hands and feet and throws him in a corner. Rustam is immediately informed, but he considers this upheaval a good omen for a favourable development of the marriage and waits until the following morning before going to the couple to liberate Giv and gently chastise his daughter for her rebellious behaviour. After a forty-day banquet, the king and the Iranian warriors return home. The story concludes by mentioning the birth of a strong son, who is named Bizhan.⁸

The Interpolated *Banu Gushaspnama* in ms. Or. 2926

The last of the interpolated later epics in BL consists of 221 verses.⁹ Although the story is referred to here as 'the interpolated *Banu Gushaspnama*', it represents the later epic in a considerably different redaction. Whilst including a synopsis of a part of the second story of the separate *Banu Gushaspnama*, the interpolation can best be described as a paraphrase of the epic's fourth story. The interpolated and separate versions are told in completely different wordings and further differ on several points, such as their setting, the manner in which the stories are presented and a number of more or less important particulars.

BL's interpolated *Banu Gushaspnama* runs from f. 249v, line 7 to f. 251r, line 19 and is located in the episode dealing with Kay Kavus' revenge for the murder

8 Ibid., vv. 1030–32, follows the Paris ms., where the mention of Bizhan's birth takes up the last three verses of the poem. The other complete, lithographed, version Karachi consulted, makes no mention of a child.

9 Rieu, *Supplement*, 130–31, no. IX, 'an episode relating to the warlike daughter of Rustam'.

of Siyavakhsh. In Khaleghi-Motlagh's *Shahnama* edition (KM),¹⁰ this episode is divided into two parts: the first is *dastan-i kin-i siyavakhsh*, 'the story of the revenge for Siyavakhsh' (KM, II, 379–416) and the second, *dastan-i raftan-i giv ba turkistan*, 'the story of Giv going to Turkestan' (KM, II, 419–70). The section into which the *Banu Gushaspnama* is interpolated occurs towards the end of 'the revenge for Siyavakhsh' and tells how the Iranians, as part of their campaign of vengeance, invade Turan. After having ruled Turan for seven years, Rustam plunders this country and returns home, upon which Afrasiyab retaliates by attacking and devastating Iran.

BL's interpolated *Banu Gushaspnama* is located at a point in the story just before Afrasiyab, in exile in China, learns that Rustam and the Iranian heroes have returned with their spoils to Iran. The main text of the *Shahnama* says that, en route to the king's court, the heroes go by way of Zabulistan: this is where the interpolated story is set. The following verses, which more or less agree with BL, f. 249v, 6B–C and f. 251r, 20–21A, are quoted from KM, II, 411, vv. 420–25.¹¹

ز گنج و سلیح و ز تاج و ز تخت	به ایران کشیدند بر بسته رخت ¹²
ز توران سوی زابلستان شدند	بنزدیک فرخنده دستان شدند
سوی پارس شد طوس و گودرز و گيو	چنان لشکری نامبردار نيو
نهادند سر سوی شاه جهان	چنین نامداران و فرخ مهان
چو بشنید بدگوهر افراسیاب	که شد طوس و رستم بدان سوی آب
شد از باختر سوی دریای کنگ	دلی پر ز کین و سری پر ز جنگ

The treasury and the armoury, the crown and the throne / they brought to Iran as they set off with their baggage

From Turan they went towards Zabulistan / and came to the fortunate Dastan

Towards Fars went Tus, Gudarz and Giv / those renowned intrepid soldiers

10 Abu'l-Qasim Firdausi, *Shahnama*, ed. Djalal Khaleghi-Motlagh.

11 The break in the text occurs only in KM. References to verses in BL are as follows: folio, line number and the *bait* of this line, with A representing the 1st *bait*, B the 2nd one and C the third.

12 BL, f. 249v, 6B, the first *misra'* ends in *کمر* instead of *تخت* and the second one in *بیش* instead of *بر بسته رخت*, which changes its translation to, *The treasury and the armoury, as well as crowns and belts / beyond count they brought to Iran*.

They headed towards the king of the world / these famous and fortunate great men

When the bad-natured Afrasiyab heard / that Tus and Rustam had crossed that river

He came from the East towards the river Ganges / his heart full of rage and his head filled with war

After the second of these verses (KM, v. 421), thus directly after the heroes on their way from Turan come to Zal's court in Zabulistan and before they travel onwards to Iran, BL presents the interpolated *Banu Gushaspnama*. This story is introduced by a lengthy rubric, which translates as 'The nobles and army leaders of Iran talk at Tahamtan's palace about obtaining Banu Gushasp and they quarrel with each other'.¹³ The first five verses may be interpreted as a transition from the preceding episode to the interpolation's story proper. Following a commonplace verse that rather vaguely refers to the author's source, the story of the revenge for Siyavakhsh is closed off and, somewhat repetitively, a number of heroes that have travelled with Rustam from Turan are listed (BL, f. 249v, 7A and C, 8A and C and 9A).

ز گفتار فرزانه سرفراز	چنین خواندم این دفتر دلنواز
سیاوخش فرخنده پاکدین	ز کین خواهی شهریار گزین
ابا نامداران فرخ نژاد	ز توران بلران زمین رو نهاد
فریبرز و گسستم و فرخ نژاد	چو طوس و چه گیو و چه گودرز زاد
دگر زنگه شاوران دلیر	همان نیز گرگین میلاد شیر

I thus read this gracious book / from the speech of a distinguished learned man

About the revenge-seeking for the noble prince / Siyavakhsh, exalted and of pure religion

From Turan to the land of Iran he travelled¹⁴ / with the famous men of illustrious lineage

13 BL, f. 249v, 7B and 8B, گرفتن. گفته گو کردن بزرگان و سران سپاه ایران در کاخ تهمتن بجهت گرفتن. بانو گشاسب و پر خاش کردن با یکدگر. As the manuscript does not differ between the letters *kaf* and *gaf*, the *gafs* in all the quotations from BL derive from my own interpretation.

14 From the text preceding the interpolation, one may infer that 'he' refers to Rustam.

*Such as Tus and Giv and such as the sons of Gudarz / Fariburz, Gustaham
and men of illustrious lineage
As well as Gurgin-i Milad the lion / and also the courageous Zanga-yi
Shavaran*

The interpolation continues by saying that, just like every spring, the heroes come to Zabulistan to hunt and feast and to forget about warring for three months. They are entertained in Zal's palace with wine and music and after a week, in the absence of Rustam and his family members and flushed with wine, they start talking about their manliness. Gudarz responds to this by saying they need not boast as long as Rustam's daughter is present in the palace, for no one can match her in heroism. She used to go hunting together with her brother Faramarz on the plains of Turan, where she encountered Shida leading the Turanian soldiers: all thrown into distress over her beauty and bravery, they instantly fled back home.

After hearing Gudarz's words, the heroes all start wanting Banu Gushasp as their wife and they break out in a tumultuous fight. Gudarz hushes them and, in order to solve the situation, fetches Rustam. The latter gets angry at the presumptuousness of these men wanting to marry his daughter and orders them out of the palace. At this point, the story is not completely clear. First, three verses tell how Rustam pulls out the carpet from underneath the heroes, so that they all fall about. The next three verses say that everyone is astonished about Giv, for he is more intrepid than any other warrior and surely deserves to be Banu Gushasp's partner (f. 250r, 15B–17A). The reason for the heroes' astonishment has been omitted. From the separate *Banu Gushasptnama* we know the story of Rustam pulling a carpet from underneath the Iranian heroes and Giv being the only one remaining firmly seated. BL is obviously referring to this story, but fails to do so properly. Apparently, one or more verses were missed in the process of copying.

In addition, BL continues with another trial. After the carpet has been pulled, the heroes gather themselves together and Zal proposes they bring his large ancestral bow: whoever can manage to pull its string all the way back will win Banu Gushasp. Rustam agrees to this challenge and first draws the bow himself, as if to set the standard. Next, famous heroes like Tus, Gustaham, Fariburz and Gurgin and thousands of other warriors try with all their might to draw the bowstring, but overcome with pain and shame have to give up. Finally, Giv takes the bow and, after praying to God for strength, manages to fulfil the task. He is loudly cheered and presented with gold and gifts, whilst his father Gudarz enthusiastically offers Rustam his own daughter Shahr Banu.

In BL, the verses in which Giv addresses his prayer to God surround the interpolation's second and last rubric, which factually summarises the preceding part of the story and can be translated as, 'The heroes of Iran seek after Banu and Gudarz talks with Rustam; Rustam quarrels with Gudarz and Zal-i Zar arrives and speaks of drawing Sam's bow; Giv draws the bow.'¹⁵ The verses in which Giv is showered with praises are interrupted in the manuscript by a space for an illustration of half a folio's height (f. 250v, lines 7–19), which unfortunately has been left blank.

Next, the text tells how Banu Gushasp, who finally makes a personal entry into the story in the 154th verse (f. 250v, line 22B), protests against the course of events. She complains that her father has put her to shame before the Iranian warriors, but Rustam manages to talk her into accepting this marriage. However, after the couple has retired to their chambers, Giv's attempts to approach his bride and lift her veil are met with a blow on the head that renders him unconscious. Tied up, he is thrown under the bed and left until the following morning, when Rustam comes to liberate him and to chide his daughter. Although she hangs her head in shame, it still takes Giv a full day to coax her with nice words into submission. The interpolation ends by saying that, according to the account of a *dihqan*, Giv once had his way with her, from which alliance a son was born: he was radiant, had a large appetite and was named Bizhan (BL, f. 251r, 19A–C).

برخساره چون ماه و ابرو هلال	چه چونین نبودش بگیتی همال
تهمتن ورا بیژن شیر خواند	برو گوهر و سیم و زر بر فشاند
سه دایه بنارش همیداد شیر	ز شیر سه دایه نمیکشت سیر

*With cheeks like the moon and crescent-shaped eyebrows / such a boy had
no equal in the world*

*Tahamtan named him Bizhan the lion / and scattered jewels, silver and gold
over him*

*Three wet nurses lovingly provided him with milk / but even with the milk of
three nurses he could not be sated*

The most notable difference between the interpolated *Banu Gushaspnama* and the fourth story of the separate poem consists of the additional challenge

15 BL, f. 250v, 2B and 3B, خواستن گردان ایران بانو را و گفته گو کردن گودرز برستم پر خاش

رستم بگودرز و رسیدن زال زر و گوئی [؟] کشیدن کمان سام را و کشیدن گیو کانا

Rustam sets the heroes to win his daughter's hand. Remarkably, whereas the trial of the bow is absent from the separate *Banu Gushasptnama*, it does appear in the oral traditions. It was told as late as the 1960s or 1970s by several narrators quoted by Anjavi Shirazi, whose collection of orally transmitted stories includes the two anecdotes about Giv winning both challenges.¹⁶ Possibly, these same narrations circulated several centuries earlier and incited a poet to compose an alternative written version of the *Banu Gushasptnama*, but it seems more likely that the 20th-century oral traditions originated in retellings of the written interpolation.

Further differences between the interpolated and the separate *Banu Gushasptnama* are less conspicuous, but nonetheless noteworthy. For example, in the separate poem's fourth story, the setting is Kay Kavus' court and the heroes start talking about Banu Gushasp out of the blue, whilst Rustam is away hunting. In the interpolated version, the Iranians sit in Zal's palace and the reason for Rustam's absence is unclear. The heroes are reminded of Banu Gushasp's unseen presence in the palace by Gudarz. He recounts a variant of the first part of the separate epic's second story. That version specifically mentions Shida falling in love and being cured only after seeing the cloven body of Tamartash. The interpolated *Banu Gushasptnama* merely says that all the Turanian soldiers lose their reason because of Banu Gushasp's radiance, so that they immediately break up camp and leave.

The interpolation also gives Banu Gushasp an opportunity to protest verbally against her marriage and it presents Giv over a number of verses as a gentle husband. In the separate version, Banu Gushasp remains silent throughout the fourth story and the newly married Giv is portrayed, very briefly, as having little consideration for his wife's feelings. In addition, from one version to the next, Banu Gushasp deals slightly differently with Giv's overtures. And finally, unlike the separate later epic, the interpolation mentions Rustam's marriage to Giv's sister Shahr Banu.

Although these differences do not influence the gist of the story, the fact that they exist does make one wonder whence they originated. Apparently, the *Banu Gushasptnama* was transmitted throughout the centuries in more than one written version. The likelihood that one or more verses about Giv winning the trial of the carpet are missing, points to the interpolated *Banu Gushasptnama* as not having been composed by BL's scribe, but to it having

16 Sayyid Abu'l-Qasim Anjavi Shirazi, *Firdausinama (Mardum va Firdausi)*, 71–78, includes four stories plus three shorter references dealing with Banu Gushasp and the trials to win her hand. The third and fourth stories (pp. 74–78) mention both challenges, although they both put the trial of the bowstring before that of the carpet.

been incorrectly copied from an earlier manuscript. Regrettably, with the unavailability of any other, older, interpolated versions of this later epic, it cannot be guessed upon which exemplar BL's 19th-century interpolation may have been based. When this retelling of the separate *Banu Gushaspnama* could first have been written, remains unknown.

Leaving aside the problem of when a scribe may have introduced a story from the *Banu Gushaspnama* into the *Shahnama*, there is still the question of his choice of its placement. The presentation of Banu Gushasp in the episode of the revenge for Siyavakhsh's murder is hardly obvious. The story of the Iranian heroes feasting and then fighting over Banu Gushasp and of her subsequent marriage fits badly within the context of this episode. As a result of BL's interpolation, this version of the *Shahnama* tells how the Iranian warriors, carrying their plunder from Turan, return to Iran and on the way stop at Zal's palace, where they quarrel about Banu Gushasp. After Giv has won her hand in marriage, from which a son is born, nobles such as Tus, Gudarz and Giv travel to Kay Kavus' court, whilst Afrasiyab, hearing of their return to Iran, crosses the Ganges to go to war.

Whereas the interpolated *Banu Gushaspnama* is announced by a rubric alerting the reader to the beginning of a new episode, the transition between the last lines of the interpolation and the main text of the *Shahnama* is rather sudden. The mention that Bizhan cannot be sated with the milk of three nursemaids is directly followed by the Iranian heroes travelling to Kay Kavus and Afrasiyab returning to Turan intent on revenge. As the quotation above from KM shows, the verses preceding and following the interpolation clearly belong together: the Iranians return home from Turan by way of Zabulistan (KM, v. 421), where they apparently leave Rustam, before they head on towards the capital (KM, vv. 422–23). Within the setting of BL, however, the two verses about the heroes returning to Iran occur out of their original context and Afrasiyab's following retaliation has lost its effect. As the action relating to Banu Gushasp happens in Zabulistan, the location of the interpolated *Banu Gushaspnama* only makes sense with regard to its geographical setting. In any other aspect, since its story has no relation whatsoever to the revenge of Siyavakhsh's murder, the interpolation appears completely out of place.

The reason why a scribe decided to interpolate the *Banu Gushaspnama* at the point indicated must be that it is close to the episode in which Khusrau is fetched from Turan by Giv. The appearance of Banu Gushasp in this part of the *Shahnama* can only be explained by her becoming Giv's wife. The main point of the interpolated story is that Rustam's daughter and Giv are married: through this marriage, the two men become related. Banu Gushasp thus serves as the connection between two major, if not the most prominent, *Shahnama*

families. One could say that Giv and Rustam are Kay Kavus' most important heroes. Of all of Giv's actions, his mission to search for prince Khusrau is the most heroic and memorable. By fetching Kay Kavus' grandson, he ensures that the Kayanid dynasty may continue. In a similar manner, the Iranian kingship was in the past saved by Rustam.¹⁷ The family connection between these two heroes shows that the choice to interpolate the *Banu Gushaspnama* in the story of the revenge for Siyavakhsh, just before the episode in which Giv fetches Khusrau, was made with a purpose.

This purpose becomes all the more clear further on in the *Shahname*, in four different, spurious, short passages. They hark back to the story of Banu Gushasp becoming Giv's wife. As the discussion below shows, by means of these passages, which occur not just in BL, but also in a number of older manuscripts, the family connection between Giv and Rustam is underscored.

Banu Gushasp's Appearance in the *Shahname*

The basic *Shahname* text of reference used in this case study is the recently completed critical edition of Khaleghi-Motlagh (KM). It was compiled after a thorough examination of the oldest known manuscripts and a subsequent collation of the fifteen texts the editor judged most reliable.¹⁸ This version of the *Shahname* can therefore make a valid claim to being relatively free from supposed later additions or amendments. In addition, verses that Khaleghi-Motlagh encountered in not all of the manuscripts he consulted and he believed to be extraneous to Firdausi's original text, he relegated to the footnotes. In this manner, comparison of KM to other *Shahname* texts, such as BL, easily reveals probable interpolations.

BL includes four spurious passages that pertain to Banu Gushasp. Only two of these, the second and third ones, are included in KM's footnotes. However, all four passages do appear, with certain variants, in the 19th-century *Shahname*

17 Besides fetching Kay Qubad from Mount Alburz (KM, I, 339), Rustam liberates Kay Kavus from captivity in both the episodes of *jang-i mazandaran* (KM, II, 3–65) and of *jang-i hamavaran* (KM, II, 67–101), as well as, together with Giv, taking part in the expedition to retrieve Kavus after his flying adventure (KM, II, 95–100).

18 Djalal Khaleghi-Motlagh, "The long road to a critical text of the *Shahname*", 54–59, explains his reasons for making this edition, lists the 15 manuscripts and summarily describes his methodology. These 15 texts were selected after a review of the 45 oldest manuscripts available to the editor, dated between 614/1217 and 903/1498.

editions compiled by Macan and by Mohl.¹⁹ Although both editors collated a relatively large number of manuscripts, they each give little information about the provenance of their texts,²⁰ which makes it for the present-day researcher practically impossible to retrace exactly which manuscripts either editor consulted. Moreover, these editions lack an apparatus of variant readings and therefore cannot be called critical. Neither Macan nor Mohl give the reader any clue as to which part of their text derives from which, or how many, manuscripts. Their methodology actually differs little from the one scribes used in the manuscript tradition.²¹ Comparison of BL with KM, Macan and Mohl reveals how Banu Gushasp appears in different *Shahnama* texts in variant forms.

Three of the four passages mention Banu Gushasp by name. All three occur shortly after the interpolated *Banu Gushaspnama*. The first one appears towards the very end of the story of the revenge for Siyavakhsh (KM, II, 379–416), just before Giv leaves for Turan to fetch Khusrau, whilst the other two occur in the episode that deals with Giv's mission (KM, II, 419–70). In the first and third of these passages, Banu Gushasp makes a personal, albeit rather brief, appearance; in the second one she is merely mentioned in a speech. She is further referred to, although not by name, in a fourth place, which occurs in the story of Bizhan and Manizha. In these *Shahnama* passages, Banu Gushasp is not presented as she is in the first three stories of the separate *Banu Gushaspnama*, as a warrior in her own right. Instead, the references to her hark back to her role in the fourth story, or in the interpolated version, of Giv's wife.

The following discussion deals with each passage in turn. First, it is placed in context by summarising KM's main text around the point where the interpolation appears in BL. Next, BL's verses dealing with Banu Gushasp are quoted and translated, as well as compared with their versions in Macan, Mohl and, where relevant, KM's footnotes, in order to note any remarkable differences.

The First Passage: Giv Departs for Turan

The first passage that mentions Banu Gushasp occurs in the episode in which Gudarz sees the angel Surush in a dream (KM, II, 413–16, vv. 441–90). Surush tells the Iranian warrior that Siyavakhsh's son Khusrau will come and avenge his father's murder and it is ordained that Gudarz's son Giv will fetch Khusrau

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- 19 Abu'l-Qasim Firdausi, *The Shah nameh: an heroic poem, containing the history of Persia from Kioomurs to Yesdejird*, ed. Turner Macan (henceforth Macan) and Firdausi, *Le livre des rois*, ed. and trans. Jules Mohl (henceforth Mohl, M).
- 20 Macan, I, xi and 4–6, mentions a total of 21 manuscripts and M, I, lxxxiv–vi, lists 32. Both editors give for only about half of the manuscripts their dates.
- 21 Khaleghi-Motlagh, "The long road", 54.

from Turan. The next morning, Gudarz recounts his dream to Giv and tells him he will gain eternal glory by undertaking this perilous enterprise. In response, Giv swears to his father that he will fulfil his duty, after which he returns to his palace to make preparations for his journey (KM, 414, vv. 473–75). KM follows this part of the story with a space between the lines, to mark a break in the text and introduce a new day on which Giv departs for Turan.

At the point where KM inserts a break in the story (vv. 475–76), BL presents ten additional verses. They make up the first passage dealing with Banu Gushasp, to which KM makes no reference at all. In the first of these ten verses, Banu Gushasp is introduced as Giv's wife, *banu-yi giv*, and in the next one, she is mentioned by name. A short speech follows, in which Banu Gushasp asks her husband permission to return to her father whilst Giv stays in Turan, after which she departs (BL, f. 251v, 14B–17B).

که دخت گزین رستم نیو بود	مہین مہان بانوی گیو بود
که مر گیو را رفتن آراست اسب	خبر شد همانکہ بہ بانوگشسب
چنین گفت کای مہتر نامجوی	پیآمد خرامان بہ نزدیک اوی
کہ خسرو بجوئی نزدیک و دور	شنیدم کہ تو رفت خواهی بتور
شوم نزد رستم بروشن روان	چو دستور باشد مرا پهلوان
زنادیدنش جان من ماتمست	مرا آرزو چہرہ رستمست
کہ بادی ہمہ سال پشت گوان	تو پدرود باش ای جہان پهلوان
سوی سیستان روی بہناد تفت	بفرمان سالار بانو برفت
بمہد اندرون بیژن گیو را	ہمی برد با خود دو صد نیو را
ہمی راہ توران پیچید گیو	بہ نزدیک رستم شد آن ماہ نیو

*The greatest of the moons was Giv's wife
 who was the excellent daughter of the hero Rustam
 The news then reached Banu Gushasp
 that a horse was prepared for Giv's journey
 She came striding towards him
 and spoke, 'O, fame-seeking chief,
 I have heard that you will be going to Turan
 to search for Khusrau, near and far
 If the champion will give me permission,
 I will go to Rustam, that enlightened soul*

*I have a longing for Rustam's face,
 not seeing him has made my soul sorrowful
 You will take your leave, champion of the world,
 may you throughout the years be the protector of the heroes'
 At the command of the chieftain, Banu left
 and headed quickly towards Sistan
 She took with her two hundred warriors
 and in his cradle Bizhan, son of Giv
 She went to Rustam, that moon of heroes,
 whilst Giv negotiated the road to Turan*

The verse following this passage mentions the breaking of a new day (KM, v. 476), where the focus in the story returns to Giv. Nothing is said about how his wife is faring in Sistan.

In Mohl, the interpolated verses are followed by not just a break in the text, but also a rubric.²² Besides some minor variant readings compared to BL, Mohl further gives only the first eight lines of this interpolation and thus does not have the last two of the quoted verses, which include a mention of Bizhan. Macan's version, which is also directly followed by a new chapter, consists of just seven verses: it is the same as Mohl's, but further misses the quoted passage's second line.²³

It is remarkable that BL says Banu Gushasp takes the infant Bizhan with her to Sistan. For just twelve lines later, whilst taking leave of his father, Giv entrusts his son to Gudarz, asking him to raise Bizhan and teach him the art of war (f. 251v, 21B–22A). These verses make no mention of Bizhan's mother. Whereas these three lines are also part of Macan (II, 510) and Mohl (II, 480, vv. 561–63), they appear, along with some variant readings, only in a footnote in KM, which suggests that they are spurious.²⁴ This suggestion is corroborated by the fact that none of the three *Shahnama* editions contains any other reference to Bizhan until he appears as a grown warrior during Khusrau's reign.²⁵

22 M, II, 478, vv. 543–50. The rubric reads, رفتن گیو بتوران بجستن کیخسرو, 'Guiv se rend dans le Touran pour chercher Kei Khosrou'.

23 Macan, II, 509–10. The rubric differs little from Mohl, رفتن گیو بتوران بجست جوی کیخسرو, ('Giv goes to Turan in search of Kay Khusrau'). To note, Macan's edition does not number the verses.

24 KM, II, 415, v. 483, n. 16, refers to three manuscripts that contain these three lines, one that presents only the first line, and another three that include a fourth verse.

25 KM, III, 3–24, کردن کیخسرو, داستان عرض کردن کیخسرو, 'the story of Kay Khusrau's review', at 13–14.

In view of this addition to the storyline, the last two verses of BL's first passage about Banu Gushasp, in which she takes the infant Bizhan with her to Sistan, are all the more remarkable. Considering their explicit mention of Banu Gushasp's son, one could infer that these two verses were added to this passage to complement the interpolated *Banu Gushaspnama*: this story after all ends with Bizhan's birth. Whereas it is possible that this addition was made by BL's scribe, it seems more likely that he copied the entire passage of ten verses off an older manuscript. This exemplar probably did not include the three verses about Giv entrusting his son to Gudarz, which means that BL's scribe must have based his *Shahnama* manuscript on different versions, without taking into account whether his text would include any inconsistencies.

On the whole, Banu Gushasp's presence in this section of the *Shahnama* is not only superfluous, but it also distracts the reader's attention from the main action. The sole reason for a scribe to have interpolated this passage seems to have been to inform his audience of the fact that Giv has a wife who, when her husband departs for Turan, returns to her father in Sistan. Apparently at the time when this passage was composed, whenever this may have been, Banu Gushasp's character was deemed important enough to be included in Firdausi's epic. Her importance for the *Shahnama*, however, did not consist of her personal actions, but of the later epic tradition that through Banu Gushasp, Giv and Rustam are related.

The Second Passage: Giv's Confrontation with Piran

The verses surrounding the second mention of Banu Gushasp's name are part of a lengthy speech by Giv. After a long quest through Turan, the hero has managed to find Khusrau and his mother Farangis and now all three are journeying to Iran, with Piran and an army of a thousand soldiers in pursuit. At a certain point during the journey, Giv crosses the river Gulzarivun, leaving Piran on the other side. The two men communicate across the water: Piran rebukes Giv for undertaking his perilous mission on his own and warns the Iranian that he will soon perish (KM, II, 436–37, vv. 266–73). In KM's main text, Giv answers Piran with a short speech of just four lines (KM, 438, vv. 274–77). He challenges Piran to cross the water and fight, if he dares, saying that even though he himself is just one man opposing a thousand Turanian warriors, he will still succeed in defeating them all. In response to Giv's words, an enraged Piran spurs his horse to cross the river (KM, 438, vv. 278–80). The two men start fighting, from which the Iranian emerges victorious.

At the end of Piran's speech, KM includes a footnote (v. 273, n. 9) referring to four manuscripts: all four texts include an interpolated passage of 43 verses. They are St Petersburg, National Library of Russia, ms. Dorn 329 (733/1333),

Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, ms. Suppl. pers. 493 (844/1441), Vatican, Bibliotheca Apostolica, Ms. Pers. 118 (848/1444) and St Petersburg, Institute of Oriental Manuscripts, ms. C. 1654 (849/1445).²⁶ More or less the same passage occurs in BL. This latter version does, however, include a number of variant readings, as well as consists of merely 41 lines: although this changes little to the content of the interpolation, BL does not include lines 36–37 of KM's footnote. The first 37 verses, or 39 in KM, are completely dedicated to Giv's reply to Piran; Piran's answer covers the last four verses.

In this interpolated passage, Giv tells Piran how he avenged Siyavakhsh's death by killing both Turkish and Chinese nobles, sacking Piran's palace and disgracing his wife and sister, whilst Piran himself fled in fear. Surely, Giv continues, he will manage single-handedly to take Khusrau safely to Iran. Then he presses the argument by telling Piran how all the princes and heroes sought after Banu Gushasp's hand in marriage, but were rejected by Rustam, in favour of Giv himself. The following ten verses, quoted from BL, f. 254r, 16C–19C, occur around the middle of Giv's speech.²⁷

بزرگان هر هفت کشور زمین	چه فغفور و قیصر چه خاقان چین
بزرگان و خویشان کاؤس شاه	دلیران و گردان زرین کلاه
همه دخت رستم همیخواستند	همی بر دلش خواهش آراستند
بدامادیش کس فرستاد طوس	تهمتن بدو کرد چندی فسوس
تهمتن زیبوندشان سر بتافت	از ایران سزاوار خود کس نیافت
بگیتی نگه کرد رستم بسی	زگردان پسندش نیامد کسی
به مردی و دانش بفر و نژاد	بجد ²⁸ و به بخشش مرا کرد یاد
بمن داد رستم گزین دخترش	که بودی گرامی امی تر از افسرش
مہین دخت بانوگشسپ سوار	بمن داد گردنکش نامدار
زچندان بزرگان مرا بر گزید	سرم را بپرخ برین بر کشید

26 KM, II, 437, v. 273, n. 9, explains that the verses preceding the interpolation differ in each of the four manuscripts and that the quoted text has been amended on the basis of Dorn 329. KM still refers to the St Petersburg libraries as the State Public Library and the Oriental Institute, respectively, both in Leningrad.

27 These are lines 15–24 of the interpolated passage. The first *misra'* differs in KM, 437, n. 9, line 15, *و دیگر بزرگان روی زمین* (*And also the great men on the face of the earth*).

28 BL's reading of this word is not very clear. KM, n. 9, line 21, has *به خورد*, 'to victuals' or 'to expenditures'.

*The great men of all seven regions of the earth,
 such as the Faghfur, the Caesar and the Khan of China,
 The nobles and the relatives of king Kavus,
 brave men and warriors with golden crowns,
 All were seeking after the daughter of Rustam,
 all were pleading suit to her heart
 Tus sent someone to propose marriage on his behalf,
 but Tahamtan treated him with a load of jest
 Tahamtan turned away from any kinship with them,
 he did not find anyone in Iran worthy of himself
 Rustam looked around much in the world,
 but none of the warriors seemed suitable to him
 With regards to manliness and knowledge, to royal glory and lineage
 as well as to riches and gifts, he was mindful of me
 To me the excellent Rustam gave his daughter,
 who was more precious than his crown
 His great daughter, the cavalier Banu Gushasp,
 the lofty famous hero gave to me
 From so many great men he chose me
 and exalted my head to the high heavens*

After this passage, Giv goes on to say that in return his sister Shahr Banu was married to Rustam. Apart from Rustam, no one can equal Giv in combat, so he will undoubtedly restore Khusrau to the throne and bring Turan to ruin. Giv ends by threatening that he will personally come to put an end to Piran's life. The last four verses of the interpolation (KM, n. 9, lines 40–43) tell how, as a result of Giv's words, Piran starts to tremble with fear, yet challenges the Iranian to come over and fight him. These last interpolated lines are followed by Giv's provocative response (KM, vv. 274–77), after which Piran crosses the river and the two heroes fight (KM, v. 278 *et seq.*). Thus, in between KM's version of Piran's speech (ending on v. 273) and Giv's challenging reply (vv. 274–77), both BL and the four manuscripts referred to in KM add an extra piece of dialogue. Instead of once, both men speak twice.

All 43 verses of the interpolated passage, as given in KM's footnote, also occur in Macan (II, 523–24). The passage differs, however, in length, content and presentation in Mohl (II, 508–10, vv. 888–919). Firstly, whereas Piran's final reaction to cross the river (KM, vs. 278–80) follows Giv's words in both KM and Macan without any break, Mohl presents it in a new chapter.²⁹ More

29 M, II, 510, entitles this chapter *گرفتار شدن پیران در دست گیو*, 'Guiv fait Piran prisonnier.'

importantly, Mohl's version of the interpolated passage is considerably shorter, amounting to just 32 verses. Seven of the missing lines, including the seventh verse in the quotation above (BL, f. 254r, 18C), occur in different places throughout Giv's speech, but their absence from Mohl makes little difference to the general interpretation of the text. The most remarkable omission consists of the last four verses representing Piran's answer (KM, n. 9, lines 40–43). Having omitted Piran's second speech, Mohl's text logically also does not include Giv's reply (KM, vs. 274–77) immediately following the interpolation. Thus in Mohl, just like in KM's main text, Piran and Giv each speak only once, although Giv's speech is different and substantially longer.

Banu Gushasp's appearance in the *Shahnama* in this second passage is limited to a mere reference to her name. AS in the first passage, the verses surrounding her are for the development of the story irrelevant. They mainly give the poem some literary embellishment. Giv's mention of how he obtained Banu Gushasp's hand serves to underscore his boast that, next to Rustam, he is mightier than any other hero or royalty in the world and therefore is perfectly suited to fulfil his mission to bring Khusrau to Iran. The verses about Banu Gushasp are part of a larger passage, which was probably interpolated with the purpose of lengthening the dialogue between Giv and Piran in order to heighten the story's suspense. In addition, they inform the reader that Giv and Rustam are related and are heroes of equal standing.

Giv's mention of the foreign princes and Iranian warriors wooing and fighting over Banu Gushasp of course harks back to the *Banu Gushasptnama*: not just the fourth story of this later epic, but also its second and third ones deal in one form or another with its heroine's suitors. If one is not familiar with this later epic, Giv's mention of his winning Banu Gushasp's hand falls rather flat. It therefore is likely that a prerequisite for the interpolation of this passage in a number of *Shahnama* manuscripts was that the story of the *Banu Gushasptnama* was familiar to both the scribe and his audience. However, by making no mention of any trial, of either the carpet or the bow, and instead merely stating that he was chosen personally by Rustam as his daughter's husband, Giv tells the story of his marriage to Banu Gushasp differently. At the time this passage was composed, traditions surrounding Banu Gushasp's marriage, in addition to the ones told in the now extant written *Banu Gushasptnamas*, must have circulated in more variants. Apparently, these traditions, which led to the inclusion of Banu Gushasp in Firdausi's epic, date at least as far back as to when the oldest *Shahnama* manuscript cited in KM's footnote, Dorn 329, was copied, in 1333.

The Third Passage: Giv Returns with Khusrau to Iran

Banu Gushasp's third mention in the *Shahname* occurs towards the end of the story of Giv's mission in Turan, when he returns to Iran. As in the first passage, Banu Gushasp briefly appears in person, but this time she has no spoken lines. The story has arrived at the point where Giv has crossed the river Jaihun with Kay Khusrau and arrives in Zam, from where he sends letters to Gudarz and Kay Kavus to inform them his mission has succeeded. Kavus receives the messenger and rewards him generously for this good news (KM, 11, 451, vv. 451–53), after which the news of Khusrau's arrival travels on, everyone celebrates and the nobles of Iran travel to Isfahan (KM, 451, vv. 454–56). Gudarz decorates his palace and gathers precious gifts, before setting off to meet Khusrau (KM, 451–52, vv. 457–61).

In the verse telling that the whole world celebrates, KM includes a footnote (v. 455, n. 20) referring to the fact that three of the manuscripts he consulted, follow this verse with an interpolation. These are Dorn 329, Suppl. pers. 493 and C. 1654, three of the aforementioned four texts that include the second passage. BL also has this interpolation, which consists of eight verses. In this manuscript, though, two of the preceding verses, compared with those in KM's main text, are reversed. According to BL's reading, after the messenger has arrived at Kay Kavus' court (KM, vv. 451–52), this news is first spread all over the world (KM, v. 454), before the king rewards the messenger (KM, v. 453) and everyone celebrates (KM, v. 455). Next comes the interpolated passage, in which news of Giv's return arrives at the palace of Rostam, who sends Banu Gushasp with a large suit to bring presents to Giv, who in turn sends her onwards to Isfahan (BL, f. 256r, 15C–18A).

وزین آگهی شد سوی نیروز	به پیروزی گیو گیتی فروز
که آمد خرامان بایران زمین	به پیروزی خسرو پاکدین
به بخشید رستم بدرویش زر	که نامد گزندی بر آن شیر نر
وزان پس گسی کرد بانو گشسب	ابا خواسته همچو آذر گشسب
هزار دو صد نامور مهتران	ابا تخت و با تاجهای گران
پرستند سیصد غلامان دو شست	همه هریکی جام زرین بدست
برون رفت بانو ز پیش پدر	بر گیو شد همچو مرغی به پر
فرستاد گیوش سوی اصفهان	پراگنده نامش بگرد جهان

*News of this came to Nimruz,
 that the world-illuminating Giv had attained victory,
 That, in triumph, Khusrau of pure religion
 had come striding to the land of Iran
 Rustam donated gold to the poor as thanks
 that no calamity had befallen that male lion
 And after that, he sent Banu Gushasp on her way,
 just like Azar Gushasp, together with riches,
 One thousand two hundred exalted great men
 with a throne and with weighty crowns
 And three hundred servants and twice sixty slaves,
 all with each a golden cup in his hand
 Banu went forth and left her father,
 she went to Giv just like a bird in flight
 Giv sent her on towards Isfahan
 and his fame was spread around the world*

The interpolation quoted in KM's footnote contains an additional ninth verse, which, as the editor notes (KM, 451, n. 17), is the same as v. 454 of the main text, but in the said three manuscripts occurs at a different point. The same order of verses occurs in both Macan (II, 533–34) and Mohl (II, 528, vv. 1130–37), although the former edition leaves out the eighth verse of the interpolation (BL, f. 256r, 18A) and the latter does not include the second one (BL, 16A). According to these readings, the news of Khusrau's arrival is broadcast around the world only after Giv has been met by Banu Gushasp. In combination with the preceding interpolation, this order of events implies that the spreading of the news of the prince's arrival and the subsequent coming of all the nobles to Isfahan is Banu Gushasp's responsibility.

Despite this implication that in this third passage Banu Gushasp's role carries a degree of importance, the focus of this part of the story lies on Khusrau's arrival. As in the two previous passages, Banu Gushasp's presence in the story is basically superfluous. The main function of her reappearance in the *Shahnama* is to remind the reader that she has resided with her father for the duration of Giv's absence and, now he has returned to Iran, she leaves Sistan again to join her husband. Since this reminder links the first passage to the third one, it is remarkable that *Shahnama* manuscripts such as the three cited in KM's footnote include only the latter interpolation and not the first one. In these manuscripts, the third passage pertaining to Banu Gushasp occurs without its context and as a result factually has lost its function. How this inconsistency crept into the manuscript tradition is anyone's guess, but it is clear that at least

by the early 14th century the urge was felt to deal Banu Gushasp a role in the story of Giv's mission to Turan, so that through her this *Shahname* episode too, however briefly, could include Rustam's participation.

A Fourth Reference to Banu Gushasp: Giv and Rustam's Family Relations

Although the third passage contains, as so far known, the last mention of Banu Gushasp's name in any *Shahname* manuscript, she is once more referred to implicitly. This reference occurs in the story of Bizhan and Manizha and serves to explain Rustam and Giv's family connection. Having learned from his world-revealing cup that Bizhan is imprisoned in a pit in Turan, Kay Khusrau sends Giv with a letter to Sistan to ask for Rustam's assistance. Giv explains the situation to Rustam and gives him the letter (KM, III, 352–53, vv. 652–67), at which point certain manuscripts include an interpolation. It reminds the audience that Giv married Rustam's daughter, who became the mother of Bizhan, whilst the alliance between Rustam and Giv's sister produced Faramarz. KM presents none of these verses, neither in the main text nor in the footnotes, whilst BL has only the first and third lines (f. 304v, 2A–B). Therefore the following quotation, which differs slightly in Macan (II, 781), is taken from Mohl (III, 354, vv. 745–47).³⁰

که خویشی ایشان بد از دیرباز زن گیو بد دختر سرفراز
همان پیلتن خواهر گیو داشت فرامرزیل ز آن زن نیو داشت
همان بیژن از دختر پیلتن گوی بد سرفراز در انجمن

*For their relation was longstanding,
Giv's wife was the daughter of the exalted man*³¹
*In the same way, Piltan married Giv's sister,
by that woman the champion had the warrior Faramarz
Also, Bizhan was born from the daughter of Piltan,
he was a distinguished warrior amongst men*

30 Macan presents a variant first *misra*, 'که خویشان بدند از گه دیرباز' (*For they were relatives from a time long ago*). These lines occur between the verses that correspond to KM, III, 353, vv. 667–68. Charles Melville, "Text and image in the story of Bizhan and Manizha: I", 83–84, also mentions these verses and their absence from KM.

31 This 'exalted man', 'سرفراز', like 'Piltan' ('elephant-bodied') in the next two lines, of course refer to Rustam.

Neither woman is mentioned by name, but from the three interpolated passages discussed above, we know that Giv's wife is Banu Gushasp, whilst the second of these passages also contains a reference to Rustam's marriage to Shahr Banu. Both these women's marriages are moreover mentioned in the interpolated *Banu Gushasptnama*, which in addition informs us of Banu Gushasp becoming Bizhan's mother. It is therefore remarkable that BL omits the second from the above quoted three verses (Mohl, v. 746) mentioning Giv's sister. By contrast, neither Macan nor Mohl at any earlier point in the *Shahnama* mention Banu Gushasp's motherhood, as this is referred to in the first interpolated passage only in BL's version (f. 251v, 17A). Once again, it seems that, for a number of scribes at least, the inclusion of Rustam and Giv's family bond in the *Shahnama* took priority over ensuring that the poem's storyline did not include any inconsistencies.

Conclusion

Originally, Firdausi's *Shahnama* dealt Banu Gushasp no role. As the 19th-century British Library ms. Or. 2926 (BL), as well as Macan's and Mohl's editions testify, she does appear in a number of later manuscripts. They include three passages that mention Banu Gushasp by name and a fourth that consists of a reference to her being Giv's wife. From the fact that only two of these passages occur in a total of just four of the 15 manuscripts Khaleghi-Motlagh collated, which gave the editor reason to relegate them to his footnotes, one may safely conclude that the sections pertaining to Banu Gushasp are later additions.

This also becomes clear from the manner in which these passages about Banu Gushasp fit awkwardly within the *Shahnama*'s storyline. Especially in the three passages that include her name, her appearance distracts from the surrounding story of Giv's mission to Turan to fetch Khusrau. In addition, her contribution to the progress of the story is negligible. The first and third passages, which are contextually linked to each other, serve little other purpose than to inform the audience of the fact that Giv has a wife who, during his absence in Turan, stays in Sistan with her father. Because of this reference to Rustam, who is mentioned explicitly in both passages, the verses relating to Banu Gushasp make it clear that Giv and the famous Sistani hero are related by marriage. A similar reference is made in the second interpolation: Giv's recollection of how only he was deemed worthy enough to marry Rustam's daughter not only serves to underscore his might, but also to indicate his alliance to the Sistani house. This reference occurs again in the fourth passage, which mentions Bizhan's family relations. The main reason for a scribe to have introduced

Banu Gushasp into the *Shahname* therefore appears to have been to inform his audience of Giv's marriage bond and consequently of Bizhan being Rustam's grandson. In this manner, the emphasis on the Sistani family in the *Shahname*, which in Firdausi's original version already was considerable, shifted even more in Rustam's favour.

With the oldest known *Shahname* manuscript to include two passages mentioning Banu Gushasp being the St Petersburg ms. Dorn 329, the tendency to include Rustam's daughter in Firdausi's epic goes at least as far back as 1333. Written evidence to the connection between Giv and the Sistani family, however, is even older and thought to date from around the early 12th century: the time of the composition of the fourth story of the *Banu Gushasptnama*, Giv's marriage to Banu Gushasp. In a paraphrased form, this fourth story reappears as a *Shahname* interpolation. As such, it is part of BL, which dates from the early 19th century. Although no other interpolated *Banu Gushasptnama* has so far known to be been recorded, BL's version was most likely copied off an older exemplar. Regrettably, it is impossible to tell when the interpolated version would have been composed. Whatever its original age may be, the appearance of the interpolated *Banu Gushasptnama* in the *Shahname* has caused the focus of the end of the episode of the revenge for Siyavakhsh to change. Together with the four passages relating to this epic's heroine, the spurious material surrounding Banu Gushasp in BL is a direct testimony to how the storyline of the *Shahname* could be expanded through the inclusion of later epic traditions. This shows how the text of Firdausi's poem throughout the centuries remained alive and fluid.

In addition, the occurrence of the interpolations reflects the extent of the importance later epic traditions ascribed to Banu Gushasp. A character that does not appear in Firdausi's original poem was introduced into the *Shahname* under the influence of the stories of the *Banu Gushasptnama*. It is therefore remarkable that these interpolations do not present her in the role in which she is known from the later epic, as a skilful hunter and a fearless warrior. Instead, her actions on the hunting grounds and the battlefield are merely mentioned in short references. In the spurious *Shahname* passages surrounding Banu Gushasp, the focus lies on her becoming or being Giv's wife. Her status in the *Shahname* is practically little more than that of an appendage to her husband. As she forms the, apocryphal, link between Kay Kavus' two most important warriors, Rustam and Giv, Banu Gushasp's *raison d'être* in the *Shahname* consists of her marriage having forged these heroes' family bond. Through the interpolations in *Shahname* manuscripts such as BL, the independent warrior of the *Banu Gushasptnama* has been reduced to a mere extension of Rustam.

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The Demon Barkhiyas at the Well of Bizhan

Two Versions

Charles Melville

In many manuscripts of the *Shahnama*, the story of Bizhan and Manizha contains a digression at the point where Rustam and his seven companions reach the pit in Turan where Bizhan is imprisoned.¹ Suddenly, a number of demons appear, led by Barkhiyas Div, who is guarding the entrance to the pit. He turns out to be the son of Akvan Div, the main protagonist of the previous episode in the poem, whom Rustam had tricked and killed after being famously thrown into the sea.² Rustam is obliged to deal with the vengeful Barkhiyas before carrying on with the purpose of his expedition, to release Bizhan and bring him back to Iran.

Although the story of Barkhiyas is brief and evidently not an integral part of Firdausi's composition, its placement in the episode of Bizhan and Manizha is quite logical and serves to create a narrative continuity with the preceding episode of Akvan Div. There is some hint of an intended, or original, connection given by the fact that the stone covering the pit is called the stone of Akvan,³ but in Firdausi's text the stories are otherwise totally unconnected; they have themselves been seen as a significant digression from the story of the revenge for the death of Siyavush, which dominates the reign of Kay Khusrau.⁴ We can see the later interpolation of the story of the demon Barkhiyas, therefore, as expanding on this hint, in an attempt to create a more integrated narrative. It also provides a coda or sequel to the story of Akvan Div, in the manner of some other interpolations that have the same function, referring to the next the generation of heroes or anti-heroes, such as the *Barzunama* and *Shabrangnama*,⁵

1 Charles Melville, "Text and image in the story of Bizhan and Manizha", 87.

2 Sebastiaan den Uijl, "The trickster "archetype" in the *Shahnama*", 71–90.

3 See Anna Krasnowolska, "Ferdowsi's *Dāstān*—an autonomous narrative unit?", 20–21 and below, n. 21.

4 Kumiko Yamamoto, *The oral background of Persian epics. Storytelling and poetry*, 82–83.

5 Gabrielle van den Berg, "The *Barzunama* in the Berlin *Shahnama* manuscripts", 97–114; idem, "Demons in the Persian epic cycle: the *Div* Shabrang in the Leiden *Shabrangnama* and in *Shahnama* manuscripts", 35–47.

or appear to tie up loose ends left in the *Shahnama*, such as the stories of Faramarz.⁶

In this paper, I shall first situate the story of Barkhiyas and its illustration within the *Shahnama* manuscript tradition, before providing texts and a translation of the episode together with some concluding remarks on the evolution of the story.

The Manuscript Transmission of the Text

The earliest version of the story that I have so far identified is indeed very early, appearing in the edition of the *Shahnama* prepared by Hamd-Allah Mustaufi together with his *Zafarnama*, completed in 735/1334, and found in the margins of the earliest manuscript containing both Mustaufi's works, which dates from 807/1405.⁷ Given the stated aim of Mustaufi to restore the full text of the *Shahnama*,⁸ it is clearly of some interest that he considered this story to be one passage that properly belonged to the epic and had unjustifiably dropped out.

It is also of interest that Mustaufi's version of the story is about half as long as those that came later (see Table 2.1).⁹ Since there is at present a gap of around a century before the next firmly dated version I have identified (841/1437),¹⁰ the question arises of whether Mustaufi's text was the source for later ones and what sort of variations and additions were made. It may well be that Mustaufi's edition of the *Shahnama* fared as badly as his *Zafarnama*, to which it was linked. By the time the first longer version of the story appears it already demonstrates significant differences from Mustaufi's edition, not just in terms of

6 Marjolijn van Zutphen, "Faramarz's expedition to Qannuj and Khargah".

7 See Charles Melville, "Ḥamd Allāh Mustaufi's *Zafarnāmah* and the historiography of the late Ilkhanid period", and "Ḥamd-Allāh Mostawfi", 632–33. The ms. in the British Library (BL), Or. 2833, has been reproduced in facsimile, ed. Pourjavadi & Rastegar. I have not been able to consult the second ms., dated 808/1406, in the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art, Istanbul, no. 2042, to help with uncertain readings.

8 Mustaufi, *Zafarnama*, f. 4r, facs. ed., 7; see also Pourjavadi & Rastegar, intro. *panj-shish*, n. 22, and Soudavar, "Zafarnama va Shahnama-yi Firdausi", 753.

9 It is worth noting that the Kurdish folklore version is only 40 lines long, see Mokri, *La legende de Bižan-u Maniā*, 179–81, vs. 756–795.

10 It is possible that the BL ms. Or. 4384 is a little earlier; Norah Titley, *Miniatures from Persian manuscripts*, 51–52, dates it c. 1430, but the date is not known and I have therefore placed it second in chronological order. Another early but undated ms. in the Majlis Library, Tehran, no. 1096, is also taken to post-date the Cambridge ms. They nevertheless form an important source of early readings for the Barkhiyas story, see below.

TABLE 2.1 *Chronological list of manuscripts with the story of Barkhiyas Div*

Manuscript location and no.	Date	Folios ^a	No. of verses	Painting
Mustaufi, <i>Shahnama</i> (1334) London, BL, Or. 2833	807/1405	295v–296v	61	
Cambridge (CUL), Or. 420	841/1437	219r–220r	110	
London, BL, Or. 4384	c. 1440	100r–101r	112	
Tehran, Majlis ms. 1096	c. 1446	207r–208r	112	
Doha, Ms. 255	890/1485	244v–246r	116	Yes
Madrid, II. 3218	901/1496	309v–311v	120	Yes
Baltimore, Walters 600	915/1510	234v–236r	132	
Tehran, Majlis ms. 1100	c. 1543	230r–231r	113	
London, BL, I.O. Islamic 133	967/1560	201v–203v	107	Yes
Paris, BNF Supp. pers. 2113	974/1567	221r–222r	No details	
London, Sotheby's 2004.4.25 lot 25	980/1572	f. 200r	No details	Yes
Istanbul, Topkapi H. 1513	c. 1575	227v–228v	96	
London, BL, I.O. Islamic 3540	c. 1580	204r–205v	113	
Cambridge, CUL, Add. 269	c. 1580	217v–218v	118	
Doha, Ms. 639	991/1583	201r–202v	118	
St Petersburg, NLR, Dorn 334	992/1584	246r–247r	118	
Berlin, Diez A. fol. 1	1002/1593	287v–289r	130	
Munich, Cod. pers. 10	late 16th c.	284r–285v	113	Yes
Istanbul University Library FY 1405	late 16th c.	189v–190v	111	
London, BL, I.O. Islamic 301	1008/1600	f. 142r	In lacuna	
Oxford, BOD, Ouseley 344	1010/1601	237v–239r	118	Yes
St Petersburg, NLR, PNS 90	1011/1602	279v–280v	112	
Paris, BNF, Supp. pers. 490	1012/1604	168v–169v	94+	
Berlin, or. fol. 4251	1014/1605	366r–367r	25 ^b	
London, BL, Add. 7724	1021/1612	168r–169r	118	
NYPL, Spencer Pers. 2	1023/1614	217r–218v	115	
NYPL, Spencer Pers. 3	1026/1616	231v–233r	c. 111 ^c	Yes
Baltimore, Walters 602	1027/1617	245v–247r	112	Yes
Baltimore, Walters 601	1028/1618	307r–308r	100	
Krakow, Sygn 1800Z	1028/1618	161r–v	No details	
Mumbai, Cama Inst. BBP-86	1030/1621	f. 386v	No details ^d	
NYPL, Spencer Pers. 13	1032/1623	221v–223r	106	

TABLE 2.1 *Chronological list of manuscripts with the story of Barkhiyas Div (cont.)*

Manuscript location and no.	Date	Folios ^a	No. of verses	Painting
Berlin, or. fol. 4252	1043/1634	f. 271r	No details ^b	Yes (19th c.)
Tehran RA, ms. 1945–1227	1060/1650	p. 402	No details	Yes
St Petersburg, NLR, Dorn 333	1061/1651	399r–400v	115	Yes
Doha, ms. 636	1067/1657	133r–134v	114	
Mumbai, Cama Inst. HP ms. 9	1067/1657	331v–330v ^e	No details	
Tehran, Melli, 1063F	1086/1675	p. 438	No details	Yes (19th c.)
Munich, Cod. pers. 11	17th c.	209r–210v	114	Yes
Ann Arbor, GL 280	17th c.	205r–206v	109	
St Petersburg, NLR, PNS 381	17th c.	165r–166v	109	
Berlin, or. fol. 3380	late 17th c.	226v–228r	111	Yes
St Petersburg, NLR, PNS 64	late 17th c.?	206r–207v	114	Yes
Paris, BNF S-L 248	late 17th c.?	213r–216v	114	
Mumbai, Cama Inst. , R415a	1200/1785	296v	No details	Yes
Tehran, Reza Abbasi, ms. 70.67.1	1239/1824	p. 290	No details	Yes
NYPL, Spencer M&A Pers. 2	c. 1825	199r–200v	84	Yes
Paris, BNF, S-L 238	1254/1838	198r–199r	94	
Manchester, JRL, Pers. 525	19th c.	268r–269r	102	
Budapest, Perzsca F3	19th c.	189r–190v	107	Yes
Oxford, BOD, Ouseley Add 176	c. 1425 ^f	184v–185v	107	

- a Folios are shown in **bold** where the complete text is available to me. Most of these are tabulated in Table 2.3. The number of verses given for other mss may be inaccurate by one or two lines, as in my earliest investigations I noted M, 1148 (KM, 1044), the '*haft gurd*' verse, as triggering and ending the interpolation, whereas later study has shown that this may not always be the case.
- b Berlin, or. fol. 4251 contains only the beginning of the interpolation, see below, pp. 45–46 (n. 31).
- c NYPL Spencer Pers. 3 is missing a folio at the end of the interpolation; beginning and end not fully recorded.
- d Berlin, or. fol. 4252 is currently inaccessible, undergoing conservation.
- e This ms. is paginated as an English book, in reverse order.
- f Date of interpolation uncertain.

additional lines, but also omissions and changes of phrasing. Later versions are close enough to this longer text—with the scribal interventions and minor modifications that are associated with the transmission of the *Shahnama* as well—to allow us to speak of a coherent manuscript tradition from then on, despite one or two significant variations.

Concerning this later tradition, it must first be observed that the presence of the story of Barkhiyas is most easily noticed when it is illustrated, as it is on a number of occasions.¹¹ There are surely several extant texts of the story that have not yet been identified, either because the manuscripts have not been sufficiently thoroughly studied, or because they have not been read at all—the Cambridge Shahnama Project, for example, has concentrated so far only on illustrated manuscripts. Nevertheless, because of my close engagement with the episode of Bizhan and Manizha over quite a long period, and the opportunity to inspect and sometimes revisit manuscript versions of the story, I am reasonably confident that I have routinely noted examples of the Barkhiyas interpolation, even if I have not recorded all the details. Thus those listed in Table 2.1, some 50 witnesses of the passage, are noted out of around 130 manuscripts that I have actively scrutinised with a focus on the text of Bizhan and Manizha and the rubrics they contain,¹² regardless of whether the episode is illustrated or not; this has normally revealed the presence of the interpolation.

It is noticeable from Table 2.1 that after a small number of examples from the end of the 15th century—including the first copies to be illustrated—there are significant gaps in the record until the late 16th century, after which the passage becomes quite a common feature, and is increasingly often illustrated.

The timing of the ‘first’ appearance of the longer version in the early 15th century coincides quite closely with the introduction of other interpolations, or rather, copies of other works in the Sistan epic cycle: such as the *Barzunama*,¹³ or the slightly earlier *Bahman-nama*, and like them associated with Shiraz manuscript production.¹⁴ It is noteworthy that both the scribes of

11 See Shahnama Project at <http://shahnama.caret.cam.ac.uk/new/jnama/card/cescene:1874383192>, and below.

12 I have an article in preparation on the rubrics in the *Shahnama*. For a preliminary exploration of the topic, in connection with the story of Furud, see Charles Melville, “Rubrics and chapter headings in texts of the *Shahnameh*”, and a table of rubrics in Bizhan & Manizha in Melville, “The *Shāhnāme* manuscript tradition: The next 1000 years?”, 25–26.

13 See Eleanor Sims, “The earliest recorded *Barzunama* manuscript?”, 189–202; van den Berg, “The *Barzunama*”.

14 For a summary of these “anonymous narrative poems” and mss, see de Blois, *Persian literature*, 2nd ed., 465–74; for the epics in the BL ms. Or. 2780, see Elaine Wright, “Firdausi and more”, 65–84.

the second manuscript of Mustaufi's combined *Zafarnama* and *Shahnama* are from the same family as those of the 1397 *Shahnama* and 'Collection of epics' manuscript.¹⁵ This prompts one to look at Mustaufi's edition for other interpolations too, but he does not include the *Barzunama*, for instance. Nevertheless, this manuscript production reinforces the notion of a sentiment on the part of Timurid patrons to focus on the *Shahnama* and the totality of the epic tradition.

The celebrated Baysunghur edition of the *Shahnama* dated 833/1430—which does include the *Barzunama*—does not, however, contain the Barkhiyas episode. It is remarkable that the fine copy of the *Shahnama* made for Ibrahim-Sultan, probably produced around 1425,¹⁶ does contain the Barkhiyas interpolation, but this is a later insertion into the manuscript: a whole folio, rather crudely done compared with the refinement of the original work, has been added, with some additional text in the bottom margin of the preceding folio to ease the transition (see fig. 2.1). This is, therefore, very literally, physically, an interpolation into the manuscript by someone who clearly considered its omission to be a serious enough flaw to justify the very clumsy insertion. Exactly when this was done is not clear, but evidently before the first foliation was carried out and possibly even before the gathering of the existing quire. The calligraphy is evidently of the Safavid period, and perhaps these changes were made at the same time that the additional prefatory material was inserted, and other marginal notes.¹⁷ As for the inserted text, it shares some distinctive readings with the Walters ms. 600 version but does not contain the additional passages found there; it is at times also very close to the 15th-century copies, but not consistently to one particular version.¹⁸

15 The scribes of Or. 2780 are signed as Muhammad b. Sa'id b. 'Abd-Allah al-Qari and Muhammad b. Sa'id b. Sa'd al-Hafiz al-Qari, presumably cousins; the scribe of Mustaufi's volume, Istanbul ms. 2042, is given as Hasan b. 'Abd-Allah al-Qari (for the *Shahnama*) and Muhammad b. Sa'id b. 'Abd-Allah al-Hafiz al-Qari (for the *Zafarnama*), the latter clearly the same as the main scribe of Or. 2780. Some uncertainty remains over the exact relationships between those named, see Pourjavadi & Rastegar, intro., *du*, and n. 6, noting the confusion in the patronymic of Hasan al-Qari; Melville, "Between Firdausi and Rashid al-Din", 52.

16 See Abdullaeva & Melville, *The Persian Book of Kings*, esp. 28–30, 124–25. It does not contain the *Barzunama*. We may note that the Juki *Shahnama*, RAS 239, contains neither the Barkhiyas nor the Barzu interpolation.

17 Abdullaeva & Melville, e.g. 31 (fig. 15), 72 (fig. 43), 104 (fig. 70), 113 (fig. 78). There is still more work to be done on the history of this important manuscript.

18 See below and Table 2.3, final column. Comments are made in passing on some of its readings; it shares several features with BL, Or. 4384.



FIGURE 2.1 The start of the Barkhiyas interpolation in the margin of the Ibrahim-Sultan Shahnama, marking the insertion in the text; the interpolation continues on the following folio in a more regular nasta'liq. Bodleian Library, University of Oxford, MS. Ouseley Add. 176, folio 184 verso.

I have obtained copies of a number of these manuscripts, generally the earliest or some of those associated with illustrations.¹⁹ In view of the large number of variants and the likelihood of more appearing in the future, and for the limited purposes of this study, I make no claim to be providing a definitive critical text of the story. Rather, my aim, apart from drawing attention to the interest of the interpolation, is to confront Mustaufi's text of 1334 with the longer version, which crystallised around 1500, noting some of the main variants. This will provide the fullest version of the story currently available, and allow a discussion of the modification of the story in its various retellings. It is also possible that by grouping manuscripts with the same version of the interpolation, we can identify discrete strands of transmission.

Before turning to the story itself, it is useful to describe its location within the episode of Bizhan and Manizha, its illustration, and the placement of the illustrations within the text.

The Location of the Interpolation in the Text

In Mustaufi's text, the story of Barkhiyas is inserted after Mohl verse 1147 of the episode of Bizhan and Manizha, which then resumes at verse 1148. In Mustaufi's version, these read:²⁰

چو آمد بر سنگ اکوان فراز بدانجای اندوه و گرم و گداز ...
چنین گفت با نامور هفت گرد که روی زمین را بایاد سپرد

which is quite logical. "When Rustam approached the stone of Akvan, to that place of grief, anguish and affliction" ... there were many divs there. In other words, the interpolation immediately follows the mention of Akvan and Rustam's arrival at the pit with his companions. It is only after he has dealt with Barkhiyas that he addresses the seven heroes and invites them to advance and lift the boulder off the mouth of the well. From the account of Afrasiyab's orders earlier, we learn that the stone that was used to cover the mouth of the pit was called the stone of Akvan Div, which the lord of the world had brought

19 The temptation to carry on collecting examples is of course strong, but this paper has already been enormously delayed by doing so, although some useful additional elements have been gained, even quite late in the process; I feel enough information is available to present the core of the argument, if not an exhaustive study.

20 Firdausi, *Shahnama*, ed. Jules Mohl, repr. Afkari [hereafter M], 11, 833–34, essentially the same in ed. Khaleghi-Motlagh, 111, 380, lines 1043–44 [hereafter KM].

from the depth of the sea and thrown into the jungle of China. There, it covered the mouth of the well of the Div Arzhang; it was brought by elephant to cover Bizhan's pit.²¹

Although it is rather tenuous, this detail does suggest that there was some connection between the episodes of Akvan Div and Bizhan and Manizha in the sources for these stories: a connection that perhaps Firdausi chose to play down, but that later writers sought to restore. In the Persian version of Qazvini's *'Aja'ib al-makhluqat* (composed in the early 15th century, at around the same time as the 'longer interpolation'), however, the reference to Akvan or Arzhang is lost and the pit is called the "well of Bizhan",²² and occasionally illustrated with the scene of Rustam rescuing him (see fig. 2.2),²³ or, in one bizarre version, two figures imprisoned in the pit (see fig. 2.3).²⁴

21 M 453–56; KM 384–87; cf. Melville, "Text and image", 81. This does not seem to be reported elsewhere in the *Shahnama*. Although the translation offered above seems correct, the proper interpretation is not clear. Al-Bundari's Arabic translation indicates that it was Akvan who brought the stone from the depths of the sea of China (*darya-yi kaihan khidiv*) thus apparently equating the 'lord of the world' (the Creator) with China, or else leaving that part out; al-Bundari, *Ta'rikh al-Shahnama*, 242. Mohl, *Le livre des rois*, 262, considers the 'lord of the world' to be the subject of the sentence and to have dropped the stone in China, the interpretation I have followed. The commentators do not clarify this point; Musavi, 137–38, Kazzazi, 365–66. The text of the *Shahnama* states quite clearly that the stone covered the pit of Arzhang, but was to be brought from there to cover the pit of Bizhan; the commentators, however, generally consider that Bizhan was incarcerated in the pit of Arzhang, while allowing for the alternative interpretation that the stone was so enormous that it *could have* covered the pit of Arzhang, see Kazzazi, 366. It is true that it does not much matter—no doubt more allusions underlie these few verses than can now be recovered; the important point is the clear association with Akvan Div, even if the exact nature of the connection is uncertain. Krasnowolska, "Ferdowsi's *Dāstān*", 20–21, discusses how the poet used this means to link the story of Bizhan and Manizha, assumed to have been written first, to the previous *dastan* (and others), also confirming the correct translation.

22 See Karin Rührdanz, "Qazwīnī's *'Aja'ib al-makhluqāt* in illustrated Timurid manuscripts", 478. For scenes from the *Shahnama* depicted in the *'Aja'ib* literature, see Bilha Moor, "Shahnama kings and heroes in *'Aja'ib al-makhluqat* illustrated manuscripts", 267–80. I am grateful to both authors for their assistance with references to the relevant *'Aja'ib* literature and details of the illustrations of the well of Bizhan, which is identified as being located in Darband (i.e. the Caucasus).

23 In Berlin, see Ernst Kühnel, "Das Qazwini-Fragment der Islamischen Abteilung", fig. 9; also Manchester, John Rylands, Pers. 37, see B.W. Robinson, *Persian paintings in the John Rylands Library*, 50, no. 106.

24 BL, Add. 23564, f. 134r. The ms. is dated 845/1441.



FIGURE 2.2 *Rostam rescues Bizhan from the 'Well of Bizhan', in Qazvini's 'Aja'ib al-makhlūqat, Persian version, Museum of Islamic Art, Berlin, no. I.6943, fol. 130 verso. The well here is located in Darband. © Museum für Islamische Kunst Berlin, SMB.*



FIGURE 2.3 Bizhan in the 'Well of Bizhan', in Qazvini's 'Aja'ib al-makhluqat, Persian version.

Note that the heading does not match the text. The verses quoted at the end of the account are not from the Shahnama. © The British Library Board, ms. Add. 23,564, folio 134 recto.

This placement of the insertion is followed in a few later manuscripts.²⁵ However, a second pattern also emerges with greater consistency, namely to start the story *after* Mohl verse 1148 (KM 1044) and repeat this line at the end, thus conveniently demarcating the boundaries of the Barkhiyas narrative.²⁶ This seems to have become the default position quite early on.

It is worth mentioning a few departures from these two main cases, for they indicate a blurring of the line between the end of the standard text and the start of the interpolation. In a few copies, some additional verses intervene between Rustam's address to the *haft gurd* ("seven heroes" at M 1148, KM 1044) and the regular beginning of the interpolation ("there were many divs there.."), generally in such a way as to *reverse* the order of Mohl lines 1147 and 1148. For example:²⁷

چنین گفت با نامور هفت گرد	که روی زمین را بیايد سپرد
شتابان پیامد بماننده برق	به آهن تن جملگی کرده غرق
پیامد بدان سنگ اکوان فراز	بدان چاه اندوه گرم و گداز
در آنجا بسی دیووارون بدند	...

This extra verse, "he came hastening like lightning, his whole body drowned in iron", can be thought of as simply extending the story of Rustam reaching the well, as can a different pair of verses found in one version:²⁸

چنین گفت با نامور هفت گرد	که روی زمین را بیايد سپرد
بدیدار آن آتش از دور جای	براندند با رستم پاک رای

25 E.g. Munich, Cod. pers.10; NYPL, Spencer Pers. 13.

26 Among them, some of the earliest copies, e.g. BL, Or. 4384; Majlis 1096; Walters 600; Majlis 1100. Also, Paris, Suppl. persan 2113 and 490, Smith-Lesouëf 248; Istanbul UL, FY 1405; Berlin, Diez A fol.1; PNS 90; Doha 636; NYPL, Spencer M&A Pers. 2; Berlin, or. 3380. This is also the placement adopted in Ibrahim-Sultan's copy, Ouseley Add. 176.

27 Doha 255; BL, Add. 7724; Dorn 333, PNS 64; Munich, Cod. pers. 11; Budapest, Perzsca F3. Also CUL, Add. 269, Dorn 334, Ouseley 344, Walters 602 (all four with a variant in the first *misra'*, for which see the extract below). PNS 381 also inserts a variant of Mohl 1146/KM 1042 here. This latter 17th-century ms. has several variants in the preceding few lines and omits M 1148 before the interpolation; like all the texts mentioned in this note, it concludes with it. CUL, Or. 420, reverses lines 1147 and 1148 but has no intervening verses.

28 BL, I.O. Islamic 133, f. 201v, I.O. Islamic 3540, f. 204r. Both copies end with a variation on the *haft gurd* verse.

پراز کینه سر رستم پهلوان	ابا نامداران و فرخ گوان
چو آمد بدان سنگ اکوان فراز	بدان چاه اندوه گرم و گداز
در آنجا بسی دیوواران بدند	...

Another version, however, by mentioning Akvan and the *divs*, introduces the interpolation with two additional lines before the standard verse:²⁹

تهمتن برخشنده بنهاد روی	همرفت پیش اندرون راه جوی
شتابان پیامد چو باد و چو برق	به آهن تن جملگی گشته غرق
به پیشش رسیدند مردان نیو	بجایی که بد جای اکوان دیو
خبردار گشتند دیوان دون	که آمد گروهی به پیش اندرون
در آنجا بسی دیووارون بدند	...

So far, this is a unique example noted in the copies studied, but others might one day be identified. At least, it shows that the production of variations continued even after the most substantial rendition of the story took shape one hundred years earlier.

Two other instances are worth noting: Diez A fol. 1 introduces a line not encountered elsewhere at the outset of the story, following M 1148, as though Rustam were reciting the story of Barkhiyas to the seven heroes:³⁰

چنین گفت از گفته باستان به پیوندم از نویکی داستان

This is what he said, "I will tell afresh a story from an ancient tale.."

The narrative then continues with the normative start (though a slightly altered word order: (وارون دیو بدند), but in another Berlin ms, there is a remarkable mingling of lines of the interpolation with the text of the *Shahnama*: after the usual start, following Rustam's words to the seven heroes, the text has the first 10 verses of the interpolation, before resuming with the story of Bizhan and Manizha at M 1149 (KM 1045), then the '*haft gurd*' verse is repeated, ushering in, however, 14 more verses of the *Shahnama*, followed by 14 of the Barkhiyas

29 Walters 601, f. 307r (dated 1618). Note that this version has neither M 1147 nor 1148 before the interpolation, but M 1148 follows after it.

30 Diez A fol.1, f. 287v; possibly the assumption is that the authorial voice takes over here.

story, finally abandoning the narrative of Barkhiyas and resuming the rescue of Bizhan from the pit at M 1172 (KM 1068).³¹ This sequence of verses makes no sense as a narrative and one can only conclude that the scribe was either working from a confused manuscript or was distracted at this point. That the interpolation was anticipated and planned is suggested by the fact that the painting of Bizhan being imprisoned in the pit has various colourful *divs* watching.³²

Disregarding these variations, the normative start of the interpolation is taken to be the first line in Mustaufi's text (slightly varied in the later versions):

در آن گه بسی دیو وارون بدند که با چاره و مکر و افسون بدند

and the number of verses counted in Tables 2.1 and 2.3 take this line as their starting point.

In a few cases at least, the scribe has added a rubric to introduce the story and sometimes two or three more to highlight its key moments (see Table 2.2). The small variations in these, and in their placement in the text,³³ reveal the lack of standardisation in the use of rubrics, but also suggest possible groupings of manuscripts. For the most part, however, the interpolation simply appears as part of Rustam's rescue of Bizhan from the pit, and its presence is only distinguishable on reading the passage attentively, or when the scene is illustrated.

The Illustration of Rustam's Encounter with Barkhiyas Div

As for the illustration of the story, so far 19 paintings have been recorded (see Table 2.1) and they all, not surprisingly, illustrate the moment when Rustam slices Barkhiyas in half, the key moment in the story. The break-lines (i.e. the verse coming immediately before the painting in the text) show a considerable consistency, the greatest number (7 out of 19) respecting the critical verse (Or. 420, v. 88):³⁴

ز سر تا میانش بدو نیم شد ز مرگش جهانگیر بی نیم شد

³¹ Berlin, or. fol. 4251, ff. 366v–367r.

³² Ibid., f. 356v. Note that the *divs* have disappeared again by the time of the later painting, f. 365v, which shows Manizha bringing news of Rustam's arrival.

³³ Represented in Table 2.3 by the verse number in bold. See also below, p. 69.

³⁴ Doha 255; Madrid, 11, 3218; Sotheby's 2004; NYPL, Spencer Pers. 3; Walters 602; Berlin, or. fol. 3380; Perzsca F3. Compare with the original line in Mustaufi, v. 47 (Appendix A).

*He cut him in two from head to waist
The world-seizer felt relieved by his death*

Others either insert the picture at one of the two preceding verses (5 examples) or the next line (2 examples), that is, the verse that generally immediately follows the painting:³⁵

تهمتن چو آن دیو را کشته دید بخاک و بخون اندر آغشته دید

*When the elephant bodied [hero] saw that dead div
Saw him stained with dust and blood..*

The remaining five paintings are placed at various points in the text but clustering round an earlier part of the story, where Rustam first confronts the *div*—a detail somewhat obscured in Mustaufi's version, where there is only one engagement (see Mustaufi, verses 37–39).

In each case, the picture essentially tells the same story of Rustam's victorious assault, although the iconography shows a few variations. Almost invariably, as in the text, Rustam is mounted on Rakhsh, though in two cases he has dismounted.³⁶ Similarly, Barkhiyas is almost always brandishing a tree or at least a branch, as in the text—though not in Mustaufi's version—but occasionally a millstone.³⁷ This reflects the fact that in the first encounter, Barkhiyas threatens to destroy Rustam with a hard rock, described in the longer versions as a millstone that he was holding (Mustaufi, v. 37; Or. 420, v. 46). It is noteworthy that of the three copies that depict Barkhiyas with the stone, two of the paintings are not placed in that part of the text, but after the critical line mentioned above (Mustaufi, v. 47); only the third (in Cod. pers.10) is placed immediately after the lines that describe the encounter with the stone, and shows Rustam's shield warding off the *div*'s powerful throw. Another picture similarly placed illustrates the moment of Barkhiyas being bisected, though he is actually empty handed, suggesting the artist was confused as to what implement he should depict.³⁸ Probably, therefore, two different iconographies were developed to illustrate the story and could to be used interchangeably, although the

35 BL, I.O. Islamic 133; Ouseley 344. Mustaufi's verse 48, reverses 'blood' and 'dust'.

36 Berlin, or. fol. 3380; Riza 'Abbasi, 70.67–1. In the latter, Barkhiyas brandishes both a millstone and a branch, to little effect, as in Perzsca F3.

37 I.O. Islamic 133, f. 203r (see fig. 2.4); NYPL, Spencer Pers. 3, f. 232v; Munich, Cod. pers. 10, f. 285r.

38 Melli 1063.

examples are currently too few to allow any pattern to emerge; the 'millstone' variation appears some time after the 'tree' scene is established and unfortunately one cannot advance the tidiest hypothesis that the 'millstone' group was nearer to Mustaufi's text and the 'tree' group to the later, longer versions.

Otherwise, there are variations in the numbers of onlookers—Rustam's seven companions and sometimes others not specified in the text as well as a number of *divs*—and in the background to the scene. As usual, in fact, there is a remarkable range and differentiation between the various renderings of the action over time. The earliest so far identified, Doha 255 (1485), is a characteristically simple scene, with the mounted Rustam slicing the neck of the static, dark-skinned *div*, who is holding a branch, against a plain curved hillside; the Madrid ms. (1496) has a slightly more elaborate landscape and a slightly more aggressive *div*, but no extraneous detail. Neither do justice to the lovingly described peculiarities of the *div*'s appearance, especially the pigeon nesting in his locks, although the *div* is correctly depicted as black. With the London ms. of 1560, we can see a dramatic jump in the depiction of the encounter, notably in a much more populous scene, with not only eight onlookers on the rocky horizon,³⁹ but several mounted knights assisting Rustam in his fight with the *divs*, centred round Barkhiyas, who is once more a black figure and strangely static, and brandishing a millstone as already noted (see fig. 2.4). Thereafter, onlookers are usual, as in the Munich ms. Cod. pers. 10 (late 16th c.), where the *divs* watch from one side and Rustam's companions from the other, while he deals with a far more aggressive, charging opponent. In Walters 602, the demon is white and alone, and strides forward towards a diminutive Rustam, brandishing a large branch, but succumbing none the less to Rustam's bisecting blow (fig. 2.5). The whole repertoire contains a wide variety of images, the most enormous *div* featuring in the crude Qajar painting in an earlier, 17th-century ms., while the most spectacular tree is certainly sported by Barkhiyas in Dorn 333 (1651), so unwieldy, however, that he can barely move and is easily cut down by the lunging Rustam. Here and in several of the later depictions, Barkhiyas is no longer black. The disaster is observed by three massive, colourful creatures behind the rocks, saddened rather than amazed or alarmed at the spectacle (fig. 2.6).

Overall, the different renditions of the scene are essentially faithful to the story and delight in the depiction of a monstrous *div* being bisected by a relatively small Rustam, with the faithful entourage of bystanders. A larger

39 It can be observed that in some texts the number of Rustam's companions is given as eight (*hasht*) not seven (*haft*), e.g. Doha 255 and some later versions that follow it: e.g. CUL, Add. 269; BL, Add. 7724; Munich, Cod. pers. 11, etc.; see below, n. 64.



FIGURE 2.4 *Rustam kills the Demon Barkhiyas, in British Library, Shahnama, ms. 1. O. Islamic 133, folio 203 recto.*



FIGURE 2.5 *Rostam kills the Demon Barkhiyas, in Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, Shahnama, ms. W 602, folio 246 verso.*



question, outside the scope of the present study, is to what extent if at all the presence of pictures has an identifiable impact on the narrative text; whether and how illustrated versions of the story differ from non-illustrated ones. It can be said, at least, that the presence and especially the placement of pictures in some manuscripts, involving passages of diagonal script (*chalipa*) before the painting, may have influenced the insertion or omission of lines.⁴⁰ As the illustrations span at least four hundred years, from the 15th to the 19th century, they speak to the dynamism of the text and its continuous interest across many different historical contexts.⁴¹

We may observe that the presence of *divs* in the picture of Rustam rescuing Bizhan from the pit can occasionally occur in manuscripts that do not contain the Barkhiyas interpolation.⁴² As there is no reference to *divs* in the standard version of the story in the *Shahnama*, it seems that the visualisation of the interpolation could take on an independent existence that might feed back into the standard iconography of the rescue of Bizhan.

The Interpolated Narrative of Barkhiyas Div

The text of the interpolation is short enough to allow a tabular representation of many of the different complete texts that I have consulted for this study (see Table 2.3); parts of the text that are available to me simply on folios that include paintings are not tabulated here. The single longest version is found in the Baltimore manuscript, Walters 600, dated 915/1510, with 132 verses, although this does not contain all the variants. It does not seem to have been the main basis for later renditions of the story, for it is clear from Table 2.3 that it differs from other texts in introducing one block of 11 verses (lines 89–99) and one of 9 (lines 110–118), which are only found (at present) in one other version.⁴³ Without these extra 20 verses, all the ‘longer’ texts studied would be relatively close, though small variations occur. Furthermore, quite apart from its length,

40 Cf. below, p. 61 (n. 90).

41 Stephen G. Nicols, “Textes mobiles, images motrices. L’instabilité textuelle dans le manuscrit médiéval”, 31–32. For a different, ‘popular’ illustration of Rustam despatching the demon, here called Palid chihr, see Mokri, *Bīžan-u Manīja*, inserted between the text at pp. 30–31.

42 PNS 65, f. 234v; Paris, Smith-Lesouëf 222, f. 250r; Keir PP20 [the presence or otherwise of the interpolation in this ms., currently inaccessible, remains to verify]. Mumbai BBP-86, f. 386v, shows Rustam rescuing Bizhan, with the dead Barkhiyas in the foreground, but I have not noted whether the text contains the interpolation.

43 Namely, Diez A fol. 1, dated 1002/1593—almost a century later.

Walters 600 occasionally offers different readings even for those lines that are common to earlier versions. This suggests that the scribe of W. 600 indulged in a considerable degree of authorial freedom; this in turn makes one wonder if the same attitude to the received text can be discerned in the case of the *Shahnama* itself in this copy—a question beyond the scope of this paper.

As the differences between Mustaufi's version (Appendix A) and the longer texts that followed are quite considerable, I have not attempted to produce a single composite text. Table 2.3 indicates which verses are common to both the shorter and the longer versions, those in Mustaufi's text that are omitted later, and those mss in which 'new' lines are first introduced. The table is not a practical way to illustrate which mss have which variants, but verses marked with an apostrophe contain differences from a previous copy in one or both *misra's* in which the rhyme is nonetheless the same. Minor changes of only a single word, where the sense remains similar, or where *misra's* are reversed, are generally ignored. Verses that are substantially different from a previous version are marked with two apostrophes.

In Appendix B I have provided a text of the longer version, based on the three earliest mss studied (Cambridge Or. 420, British Library Or. 4384, Majlis 1096),⁴⁴ with reference to another 15th-century version (Doha 255). It will be seen from Table 2.3 that for the most part, the different versions go along in parallel, and all are especially close at the end of the story. There are only some specific moments of confusion, around the beginning and again round the mid-20 verses of the longer version. Apart from the additional verses in W. 600, there is one further passage of up to seven extra verses in some texts. I include these additions and any other significant departures found in other manuscripts from the 16th century onwards in the course of the translation, which amalgamates the various versions into a single narrative. In other words, my composite English translation is not following a single composite Persian text (nor simply the text in Appendix B, in which I have therefore left the verses un-numbered).

In the English version that follows, the line numbers refer to Mustaufi's version (Appendix A); additional lines, not italicised, are identified as they occur, with reference to Table 2.3; most of them are found in Appendix B. The concluding discussion will provide a commentary on the evolution of the story

44 Majlis 1096 is dated to the first half of the 9th century (AH)/15th century, clearly correctly, but there is no precise date in the colophon. It is essentially identical to Or. 4384 and I have therefore not cluttered up the notes and tables with references to it. It should be noted that none of these three manuscripts is listed by Sims, "Towards a study of Širāzī illustrated manuscripts of the "interim period". The Leiden *Šāhnāmah* of 840/1427", 620–23.

and points arising from the notes to the translation, which indicate the main variants.

The Story of Barkhiyas Div

When he approached the boulder of Akvan, to that place of grief, anguish and affliction ...

1. *There were many wretched divs⁴⁵ there, with stratagems, tricks and wiles*
2. *One group with heads and feet like crocodiles, bodies and claws like leopards*
3. *One group with body-hair like sheep, with curls hanging down like bows*
4. *One group with legs and hooves like mules, one group with ears and tails like hares⁴⁶*

With teeth and cheeks like a dog, a straight horn but a crooked body⁴⁷

5. *One div was king over them, tall in stature and black of face*

He was raging against Rustam night and day; there was an ancient ran-cour in his heart⁴⁸

6. *He was the deranged son of Akvan, whom Rustam had killed with his heavy mace⁴⁹*
7. *This div's name was Barkhiyas, in fear of whom hearts took fright⁵⁰*
8. *He was talking about Rustam day and night, saying we will take an ancient revenge on him*

There follows the first long addition to Mustaufi's text, found in similar form in all the extended versions, which do not merge entirely happily with Mustaufi's

45 The word *وارون* means a creature who does everything in a contrary way; or 'wretched': cf. the description of Iblis in the story of Zāhhak: M, I, 30, vs. 127–128; KM, I, 47–48, vs. 108, 112.

46 Variant in Doha 255, 4 and several later mss, such as Munich, Cod. pers. 11. Or. 420 omits.

47 Doha 255, 5 followed by later mss.

48 Cf. line 8 below; Or. 420 and Doha 255 have both, so this cannot be considered a variant.

49 Or. 420, 6: *Akvan was the son (sic) of that div, whose head Rustam had removed with his mace*; more correct in Doha 255, 8 and followed by several mss, similar in meaning but different in form from Mustaufi's text.

50 Or. 420, 7: *who had the fear of Rustam in his heart*; and most later mss.

narrative. The basis for the translation here is Or. 420, verses 9–22 unless otherwise noted:

For he had killed the father of that male div, that div had become deranged through his hatred⁵¹

He was longing to get him in his grasp, to fight with Rustam son of Zal
He was seeking for him for months and years,⁵² whether alone or with an army

When he heard that he had come to Turan-zamin, together with braves and vengeful heroes

He sent out one of the *divs* to bring news of Rustam and his forces on the road⁵³

He came up to him and saw him [so] formidable, for the sake of Bizhan who was in chains⁵⁴

When he learned that he had come, twisting his reins, to bring Bizhan from the sorrowful pit

He returned to Barkhiyas, and said "O King who well knows
Rustam has approached with this plan, to release Bizhan from anguish and affliction"

When the son of Akvan heard these words, he seethed with those ancient hatreds

He kept repeating, "I will be spilling his blood, I'll have no pity for him
I won't spare Rustam nor his heroes, neither those famous men of his
What does Rustam son of Zal, lord of the sword and mace, weigh with me?"

After speaking this way he rose from his place, together with the male *divs* of impure mind⁵⁵

After saying this, he got ready for revenge, he and the male *divs* in the place of ambush

51 Cf. Mustaufi, 6; but really a duplication rather than a variant; also in Or. 4384, 9. Doha 244, 11 and CUL, Add. 269, 11, have this in direct speech: *Saying, "for my father Akvan was killed by him, I have been tormented by my hatred for him"*.

52 This clearly puts some distance between the story of Akvan Div and the story of Bizhan and Manizha.

53 Reading in Doha 255, 15 preferred to Or. 420, 13 and Or. 4384, 13: he had sent out (*firistada budi* instead of *firistad divi*).

54 Or. 4384, 14, followed by the longest versions and the insertion in Ibrahim-Sultan's copy. The verse is redundant as it is echoed in the next.

55 Only in I.O. Islamic 133, 21 and PNS 64, 22, somewhat foreshadowing the next verse.

So⁵⁶ Rustam came near to the pit, he and the Iranian heroes from the way

Mustaufi's text resumes here. The first *misra'* of the longer version reads
When that oppressive div saw him, his heart started....

9. *When he [Barkhiyas] saw the bright sparkling fire,⁵⁷ his heart started racing like fire*
10. *He asked "what is this wind and fire, what is all the clamour and noise on this dark night?"⁵⁸*
11. *For he was the guardian of Bizhan's pit, he didn't leave its environs for a moment⁵⁹*

One said, "this is Rustam and his companions, all club-wielding heroes"⁶⁰

12. *A div came like a swift breeze, up to the fire like smoke⁶¹*
13. *He saw that male lion's chest and forearm, Tahamtan passing round heaven's wheel*
14. *And those seven famous heroes, he saw them all and counted them one by one*
15. *He came and reported all this to the div; suddenly a shriek went up from the divs⁶²*
16. *The shahanshah of the divs rose from his seat, his mountainous form sprung from its place*
17. *He came and approached close to Rustam, and let out a cry like a raging lion*
18. *He shouted so loud at Rustam that the mountain shook and was amazed at the horror of it*

56 *Chu* ('when'), but in fact a meaningless conjunction, as there is no link to the next verse in either version.

57 From the bonfire lit by Manizha to guide Rustam and his followers to the pit.

58 Or. 420, 24 var. *He asked, who are these lion-like men, what are they doing at the pithead, this dark night?*, followed by many others.

59 This verse is one of only two in Mustaufi's text that has no parallel in the longer version (cf. no. 23).

60 Only in Or. 420, 25 followed by I.O. Islamic 133, 26. Doha 255, 28 has a different line: *When Tahamtan heard the words of the div, a cry went up from his heart and soul*, followed with variations by others.

61 Or. 4384, 26 and five other texts (including Majlis 1096) have the second *misra'*: *to the place where Rustam son of Zal was*. The same five texts have a distinct variation in the second *misra'* of the next *bait* also: *the world famous hero Tahamtan*, but come together again with Mustaufi, 14.

62 Or. 420, 26: *When the div learned of the hero Rustam, a shriek went up from one and all of them*; see below, p. 68.

Another short additional passage follows, largely consisting of the *div*'s words to Rustam; here following CUL, Or. 420, verses 30–35, unless otherwise noted:

The hearts of the heroes of the Iranian army became furious at that *div* who had lost his way⁶³

“O lion hearted, famous champion, the time for your soul has come to its end

Even now I'll bring you down to the dust and cut off your head in revenge for my father

And the same with these seven famous,⁶⁴ dagger-drawing knights of yours

I'll leave none of them on this field of battle, I'll sever your head without name or honour”

When Rustam heard the cry of that *div*, [which] reached the ears of the brave heroes

The world-hero, the famous Rustam, looked at the face of that worthless one⁶⁵

19. *Rustam looked and saw a mountain, flowing like fire*⁶⁶

20. *With a black face and a tall stature, with hairy limbs like a sheep*

21. *His mouth like a cave hanging open, with two tusks in front like a wild boar*

22. *Two eyes like saucers of blood, in front of which a hollow like a desert waste*⁶⁷

23. *Likewise his clothes were a breast-plate, inside which was a sealed place*⁶⁸

63 Only in PNS 64, 28.

64 Doha 255, 34, has *hasht yal* (eight heroes), and *hasht* again at v. 95, a scribal error (?) followed elsewhere, e.g. CUL, Add. 269, 34, 97; Dorn 334, 34, 97; Ouseley 344, 34, 97; BL, Add. 7725, 34, 97; Walters 602, 30, 93. In these cases the framing *haft gurd* verse (M 1148, KM 1044) is also incorrect.

65 I.O. Islamic 133, 35 has a completely different reading with the same rhyme: *Rustam went towards him head held high, the vengeful hero looked at him*.

66 Or. 420, 36: *When he saw him seething and in that rage, flowing like fire*; followed with preferable variants in most texts, especially substituting *chu u-ra* for *mar-u-ra* or *mar-an-ra*.

67 The meaning of the second *misra'* is not very clear; Or. 420, 39 has: *his blood was flowing like the Jaihun (Oxus)*; followed by a few other versions. Doha 255, 14 has: *His body flowing with sweat like the Jaihun*, followed by most later copies examined.

68 This verse is unique to Mustaufi, perhaps because its meaning is obscure and the reading uncertain (and the line has an imperfect rhythm); the final word appears to be '*nasta*'. I take the meaning to be that his robes were like armour and kept him sealed (*basta*) inside.

24. *Sharp hairs hanging down in front like needles; angry, aggressive, vengeful and horrific*
25. *His stature was more than forty cubits tall, his breadth was fifteen cubits*⁶⁹
26. *His hair a knotted mass, its coils like deadly speckled snakes*
27. *A pigeon had made its nest in them, its neck sticking out from his hair*⁷⁰
28. *That div had no understanding, for his brain was entirely void of knowledge*

When Rustam saw such a demon *div* and heard that fearful cry of his
In his hand was a millstone, which that *div* thought to use in battle⁷¹

29. *Tahamtan stood in amazement at him; the champion repeated the name of God*
30. *Who had created such a demon, the eyes of Time had never seen the like of it*
31. *So it was until the div approached, in his [Rustam's] eyes the pure world became dark*
32. *He said to that div, "O evil one of evil stock, do you not know who I am?"*⁷²
He told him, "I am the son of Akvan Div, whom you killed with cunning and deceit"⁷³

Now I have come seeking your blood, which I want from you, pugnacious
hero

You tell me your name, so that I may realise all my desires from you"

When Rustam heard from that male *div*, he let out a cry like roaring lion
He said, "if you hear my name, you will slumber happily in the world no
longer

33. *I am Rustam son of Zal son of Sam the bold, I'm not afraid of fighting a plain of lions*
34. *I have seen many wars in every assembly, many a div's head have I struck from its body*

69 Or. 420, 41 and many others increase these dimensions: a height of 140 (*du haftad*) and a width of 17 (*dah-o haft*), and other variations. The Kurdish version has 100 x 10 *gaz* (cubit), Mokri, *Bîžan-u Manîja*, 180, v. 769.

70 In the Kurdish version, the pigeons make a nest in the *div*'s ears, *ibid.*, v. 771.

71 These two *baits* are from Or. 420, 45–46, followed by most texts. Note that there is no specific reference in Mustaufi's account to a millstone, until Barkhiyas threatens him with it in verse 37, suggesting a possible lacuna in his text.

72 Or. 420, 50 has the second *misra'*: *say from whom you are descended*. Variants on both in later copies. The variant ushers in an additional passage of Barkhiyas's reply.

73 The next few lines are from Or. 420, 51–55; minor variants in later copies. This passage integrates well with Mustaufi's text.

A list of demons follows in all the longer versions, with very few variations:

Like Arzhang Div and the Div-i Safid, like Sanja and Aulad-i 'Indi and Bid
All the male lions⁷⁴ of Mazandaran, I killed with the sword and the heavy
mace

That father of yours, full of tricks and deceit,⁷⁵ I cut off his head like the
head of a sheep

Like Puladvand and the hero Kamus, like Fartus Manthur in victory
Like Karkuy and the farsighted Shangul, like Sagsar and Chingish and the
Khaqan-i Chin

Like the worthless cannibal Kafur, like a massed army which enters the
fray⁷⁶

They were all humbled and lifeless because of me, my name was spread
in every assembly

35. *So now you have come riding on a camel,⁷⁷ you have come rushing
here to fight me"*

36. *The div replied, "O famous hero, if you have passed through heaven's
wheel*

I will seek my father's blood from you, I will show you my skill⁷⁸

37. *I will make you lifeless with this stone, I will have you groaning and
writhing in this place⁷⁹*

38. *I want revenge from you for my father now, through the good fortune
of Afrasiyab⁸⁰*

74 Or. 420, 59; all other texts read '*divs*'.

75 Munich, Cod. pers. 11, 59, reads: *that father of yours, the tall div (div-i buland), full of tricks.*

76 Or. 420, 63: somewhat obscure (as two lines above), but referring to *dar-o gir*, the give and take of battle? Not followed in later copies, which prefer: *like the massed armies by night or day (bi-lail-o nahar)*, cf. Or. 4384, 67, but different in Majlis 1096, 67—one of the few places where these two versions part company.

77 I can offer neither a clear reading nor translation of Mustaufi's first *misra'*, which does not scan properly and it is not followed in any other ms.; Or. 420, 65, has: *now you have come, tired of your life*, which is followed across the longer version.

78 Or. 420, 67 and most later versions.

79 Reading *pichan* rather than repeating *bi-jan*; but Or. 420, 68 and later versions, second hemistich: *I will render your heroes humble and lifeless.*

80 Or. 420, 69 and most later versions, second hemistich: *I will make the plain like a river with your blood.*

Four additional baits are inserted here in a unique copy in the National Library of Russia, PNS 64,⁸¹ providing the *div* with some extra lines of threats towards Rustam:

Your combat is now, your labour is now; now is your valour and your conflict

Look, see what is open and concealed, for after this you will no longer be in the world

I have come from Isfiruz in order to burn the whole land of Nimruz

My father gave me the name Barkhiyas, I have no fear of elephants or lions”

39. *He spoke, and came on like a leopard, he hurled the hard stone at the champion*

40. *Tahamtan quickly held up his shield, when the stone flew [at him] like smoke*⁸²

41. *The shield collapsed above his head, Rustam’s head and neck were wounded from his blow*

He said to himself, “my life has come to an end, I have never seen such a battling *div*”⁸³

The champion Rustam was astonished, he drew his heavy mace from the saddle⁸⁴

42. *He spurred on the brave Rakhsh, he brought his heavy mace up to his shoulder*⁸⁵

43. *And smashed the head and brains of that male div, a shriek went up from that howling div*⁸⁶

81 PNS 64, f. 206v, verses 69–72, see Table 2.3. The first line (containing verses 69–70) is written over some other text that has been incompletely erased, but which is consistent with the ‘normative’ text that resumes two lines below. This suggests that these four *baits* have been rather deliberately inserted; the alteration is clear also from the change of colour of the paper below the joint (visible also on the recto side); it must have been done rather carefully at the time of copying, with a new section of paper grafted in. The local references to Nimruz and Isfiruz link the excerpt closely to Sistan, but muddle the geographical setting of the whole story even further.

82 *Misra*’s reversed in Or. 420, 71 and all other copies noted.

83 W. 600, 75, followed by I.O. Islamic 133 and PNS 64 (with variant), but not Diez A fol. 1.

84 Or. 420, 73 and later copies.

85 Note variant in Or. 420, 74 and all other copies.

86 Variant in Or. 420, 75 and all other copies; an additional *bait* follows, which echoes Mustaufi’s: *A cry went up from that howling div, he started boiling like the sea.*

44. *Rustam believed that he had died, he quickly reached for his steel sword*⁸⁷

The elephant bodied Rustam began to stir again, he advanced upon on him

He quickly drew his sharp blade from the scabbard ...⁸⁸

45. *When the swift div saw Rustam's sword, he flew off like a bird in the air*
He went off on the air like smoke, he quickly became hidden from the hero Rustam

There follows a lengthy set of additional verses, a few of which are attested in the 15th-century texts but mainly, as displayed schematically in Table 2.3, originating in I.O. Islamic 133 (verses 84–90) and Walters 600 (verses 89–99):⁸⁹

When Rustam looked, he didn't see him; he looked left and right for some time

After Rustam passed a moment like that, a cry rose up from that wide plain

That male *div* appeared once more with a shriek before Rustam the champion⁹⁰

When Rustam saw this situation, he said to the lord of the club and mace
“If I save my life from the clutches of the *div*, it will be through the protection of the lord of the world”

When Rustam looked and saw within himself,⁹¹ the accursed *div* appeared once more

[he thought] Just as this *div* is an ugly horror, [so] is he a wicked, oppressive evil doer

87 Second *misra'* again, different in Or. 420, 77 and later copies, leading into the following addition.

88 The second *misra'* is the first half of the next *bait* in Mustaufi's text, a problem discussed below, pp. 67–68, n. 111.

89 See also Diez A fol. 1.

90 Thus far, Or. 420, 81–83; the next four *baits* are exclusive to I.O. Islamic 133, 84–87, and do not fit entirely comfortably with the master narrative. As they occur in a passage of diagonal (*chalipa*) script at the bottom of f. 202v, they may have been inserted to ensure that the text reached the correct place on the following page (f. 203r) for the painting to be introduced by the break-line verse.

91 *Chu rustam nigah kard o dar khud bi-did*: as though Rustam is perhaps conjuring up the *div* himself. Alternatively, if *bi-did* is to be read again as *padid*, the meaning might be, *So Rustam looked and he [the div] appeared as himself*.

In his hand was a tree like a heavy mace, [which] he struck on the hero
 Rustam's head⁹²
 The wooden tree in his hand broke on him, wounding the head of the
 elephantine Rustam
 He struck Rustam's shield and took him on the head, he saw stars at the
 blow⁹³
 No harm came to that hero, he said "I am Rustam the club-bearer"⁹⁴
 At that moment when he held up his shield, the great demon had a
 kinsman
 He was both his kinsman and protector; he was the image of the Div-i
 Safid
 The head of this ugly, frightening beast was in the sky, his feet on the dark
 earth
 His head upright like a dome full of hair, his body like a lion's was covered
 in hair⁹⁵
 His hands and feet were like an elephant's; yelling, he swept up like the
 River Nile
 He came after Rustam like dust, he stood firm like a piece of mountain
 Before he could strike the head of Piltan, Gurgin out of that group saw
 everything
 He drew a poplar arrow from his quiver, the nimble-gripping hero fixed
 it to the bowstring⁹⁶
 It struck the div between his shoulder blades, and came out through his
 chest, O wonder!
 He fell down like a minaret, and other *divs* rushed out from their place
 46. *He [Barkhiyas] descended like a fog, Tahamtan brought his sword
 down on the top of his head*⁹⁷
 He struck his poisoned blade on his head, he said "I am Rustam the
 club-bearer"⁹⁸

92 So Or. 420, 84 and many other copies, followed by a verse unique to PNS 64, 84 and Cod. pers. 11, 84, but rather repetitive.

93 Or. 420, 85. The following 11 *bait*s are found only in W. 600, 89–99 and Diez, 89–98.

94 The only other copy to contain this verse is I.O. Islamic 133, 90, with a variant in the second *misra'*: *he took refuge with God from that worthless one*.

95 Diez, 92: *a face full of darkness*.

96 Following the clearer reading in Diez, 96.

97 Or. 420, 86 and other versions, due to the considerable alteration of the narrative, insert this *bait*: *Tahamtan brought forth his shining sword, he fell on the div like a glowing mist*.

98 So Or. 420, 87 and later copies. Note that this second hemistich is found also in I.O. Islamic 133, 90 (see above, n. 94).

47. *He cut him in two from head to foot,⁹⁹ the world became free of the fear of that div*
 48. *When Tahamtan saw that dead div, saw him stained with blood and dust*
 49. *He got off Rakhsh like the wind, he placed the top of his head on the black earth*
 50. *And said to God, "O Giver of justice, you gave me farr (glory) strength and skill*
- For I have destroyed such a monster *div*, I threw his head down into hell¹⁰⁰
51. *Otherwise, two hundred men like sons of Zal, would not have been the match for this div*
 52. *Yours is the order and command for good and ill, likewise the star and wheel of heaven are yours"*
 53. *When Rustam lifted his face from the earth, those seven heroes began their praise*

There follows another substantial addition to the text, first in Walters 600 (verses 110–118), followed by another varying set of lines found in a number of copies (see Table 2.3). As the text of W. 600 occurs in an extended passage of diagonal text (ff. 235v–236r) preceding the painting on fol. 236v, one might speculate that the additional verses serve a function of helping the story to reach the correct point for the positioning of the picture and its rubric.

Saying, "The elephant-bodied hero gained his life through you, otherwise he would have been killed by Ahriman
 No club-bearer would have remained in Iran, no farmer and no prince
 For he would have become lifeless at the hands of this *div*, every palace in Iran would have been ruined
 No-one would have remained on saddleback, nor would Bizhan's eyes ever see the land
 Let there be a thousand praises on his hand, for through his thumb-stall Piltan came out alive
 Since he was spared from Ahriman he created a royal treasure¹⁰¹
 He wrote a sign on that treasure, he planted the tree of fidelity anew

99 All other versions read: *head to waist* and have a different second *misra'*—see above, p. 46.

100 Or. 420, 92 and most other texts.

101 *Dibih-i khusravi*, the third of Khusrau Parviz's seven treasures: see *Shahnama*, ed. Mohl, IV, 2187, v. 3907; ed. KM, VIII, 297, v. 3821.

- The lion-cub hero gave the door of the city of treasure as a gift¹⁰² to
Gurgin-i Milad”
- Those seven heroes began their praise,¹⁰³ “without you there’d be no
crown or ring”
- [Began their praise] to that giver of justice who created this world, who
created the world-hero in the world
- Through whom the warlike *divs* and male lions find no way through in
battle or revenge
- In battle with him, what of *div* or male dragon, for no hatred finds escape
from him
- If there were a foe, from east to west, he would be fleeing from battle with
Tahamtan
- No-one in the world saw anyone who compares in manliness with the
son of Zal
- Except the hero Suhrab who was from his seed, whom with his own hand
he gave up to evil¹⁰⁴
- The hero Suhrab was from his loins, one must not account him blame-
worthy for this
- In the end he threw him down and destroyed him, that head and cham-
pions’ body [went] under the dust
- The heroes then started to praise him, “May the crown and ring not be
without you¹⁰⁵
54. *“May the world flourish through your name, may the king of the
world’s heart be happy through you¹⁰⁶*
55. *There can be no hero like you in the world, in strength and manliness,
glory and skill”*
56. *Rustam answered them as follows, “we must quickly seize the reins of
our mounts*

102 *bi-jaldu*; thanks to Christine van Ruymbeke for the correct reading.

103 I.e. this passage now blends back into the standard longer version, which resumes in the next two verses, Or. 420, 96–97.

104 The second *misra*’, found in several versions, currently defeats me. The alternative verse: *Except the hero Suhrab, whose back no-one threw to the ground on the day of battle*, followed in several texts, is much more straightforward. The following two verses are unique to CUL, Add. 269 and others that constitute this group of texts, see Table 2.3.

105 The ‘standard’ longer version resumes at this point, in Or. 420, 98 and elsewhere. The result of the various previous additions is that this is the third time the heroes begin to praise Rustam; cf. n. 103 above.

106 The *misra*’s are reversed in Or. 420, 99; see below.

57. *You must wreck vengeance on these male divs, and bring the high heaven down to earth"*
58. *He and the headstrong [heroes] rushed at the divs, their heads flew off like birds*
59. *They killed so many that there remained no passage anywhere for them in those mountains*
- He killed two parts of those male *divs*; when the *divs* saw it, they turned their backs¹⁰⁷
- They fled, running into the mountain, the whole plain was like a sea of blood from them
- The Iranian heroes went after them, as fire catches hold on dry straw
- They saw no sign of them anywhere, you'd say they were all mountains and rocks
60. *Not one of them remained in the world; then he rode to the pit of Bizhan*
61. *He looked hard at that bottomless pit; when he saw that boulder at the mouth of the pit*
- He said this to those seven heroes*

Discussion

The Modification of Mustaufi's Text

The story as narrated by Mustaufi contains a coherent sequence of events and the essential elements of the encounter. It is notable that there is a great emphasis on the appearance of the *divs* and Barkhiyas in particular, described in very graphic and even loving detail, and that almost all of this is carried over without modification into the longer versions. As already noted, in this original version Barkhiyas uses only a heavy stone (later described as a millstone) as his weapon,¹⁰⁸ and the chief structural change introduced in the later versions is the second encounter, in which Barkhiyas attacks with a tree. In Mustaufi's version, the *div* merely disappears after first being struck by Rustam's mace and then returns in a fog, only to be cut in half by Rustam's sword. This brief disappearance echoes the elusiveness of his father, Akvan Div, in the previous episode, although in this case there is no need for Rustam to resort to guile. The second encounter not only prolongs the action, but has some

¹⁰⁷ These next four verses, from Or. 420, 105–08, are followed in all later copies.

¹⁰⁸ The Kurdish version too has a massive stone, which the *div* tore from the ground, Mokri, *Bizhan-u Manija*, 180.

interesting elements: to start with, Barkhiyas successfully wounds Rustam, thus making him seem a more dangerous opponent and Rustam's victory the more impressive. Furthermore, the introduction of a fearsome ally on the side of Barkhiyas gives Gurgin the chance to redeem himself, by striking the demon down before he can attack Rustam. Gurgin's treachery towards Bizhan was responsible for setting the whole train of events in motion; he gets his reward for his repentance in a second inserted passage.

Apart from the whole scene of the encounter with the tree, the more substantial additions to Mustaufi's text include first, a long account of Barkhiyas's state of mind and longing for revenge on Rustam before the latter's arrival at the pit; secondly, passages of additional dialogue on the part of Barkhiyas, containing threats designed to make him seem a more fearful foe; and thirdly, a long list of the various demons that Rustam had previously encountered and defeated. While some of these are well known characters from the *Shahnama*, others, such as Sanja, Bid and Fartus, appear to be unique to this narrative—at least, they are not found in other interpolated stories like the *Shabrangnama*, which features a large cast of demons, or *Faramarznama*.¹⁰⁹ Finally, there is the extended passage of praise to God for Rustam, not found in the 15th-century copies. Apart from the scene of Barkhiyas's attack with the tree, all these passages are merely padding, amplifying and drawing out the story to increase its impact and for the sheer pleasure of doing so.

As for whether Mustaufi deliberately left out these passages, or later sources added them, the fact that they are not always seamlessly grafted onto his narrative suggests that they are indeed elaborations of an original, shorter version. This is particularly clear with the insertion of passages of dialogue, and towards the end of the story when the longer versions have multiple moments when the heroes start their praises. Even more suggestive of the later manipulation of the text is the fact that in a large number of cases the longer version modifies Mustaufi's verses rather than simply adding to them. These changes can take various forms. In some cases, later texts reverse the *misra*'s in Mustaufi's *bait*, perhaps giving a more logical order, as in Mustaufi v. 40:

تهمتن سپر بر سر آورد زود چو سنگ اندر آمد بکردار دود

Tahamtan quickly held up his shield, when the stone flew [at him] like smoke

109 See van den Berg, "Demons in the Persian epic cycle", and van Zutphen, *Farāmarz, the Sīstāni hero*.

which is reversed without other changes in the 15th-century versions. Mustaufi, v. 54, however, is reversed and slightly altered:

که گیتی ز نام تو آباد باد دل شاه گیتی بتو شاد باد

in later versions becomes:

دل شاه گیتی پر از داد باد جهانرا بنام تو آباد باد

with no significant change in meaning, except that the shah's heart should become full of justice, rather than happiness, at Rustam's exploit, giving the verse a more exemplary sense.

In other cases, Mustaufi's first *misra*' is kept but the later scribes have altered the second; thus Mustaufi, verses 31–32:

همی بود تا دیو نزدیک شد بچشمش جهان پاک تاریک شد
بدان دیو گفت ای بد بد نژاد همانا که نامم نداری پیاد

in Walters 600, verses 52–53 become:¹¹⁰

همی بود تا دیو نزدیک شد بچشمش جهان تنگ و تاریک شد
بدان دیو گفت ای بد بد نژاد بگو کرکه داری تو نام و نژاد

which not surprisingly ushers in a different following *bait*, not found in Mustaufi (compare Appendix A and B) and is, therefore, altered to mark a transition to some new text.

More complex transformations also occur, at the level of the half *bait*, whereby, for example two separate *misra*'s in Mustaufi's text are combined into one *bait* in the later version, as a result of the expansion of the surrounding text. Thus two half-lines in Mustaufi, verses 44–45:

گانش چنان بود رستم که مرد سبک دست زین تیغ پولاد برد
چو دیو دمان تیغ رستم بدید بکردار مرغ هوا بر پرید

110 The second verse, W. 600, 53, is prefigured already in Or. 420, see above, n. 72.

are collapsed with some changes into one *bait* (79) in Or. 420, verses 77–80:¹¹¹

سبک تیغ تیز از نیان برکشید	گمان آنچنان برد رستم که مرد
بروی هوا شد بکردار دود	عنانرا برخش تکاور سپرد
	چو دیو دژم تیغ رستم بدید
	نهان گشت از رستم گرد زود

In general, however, the version established by Mustaufi is followed quite closely where the two texts coincide, and perhaps the most radical departure is between Mustaufi, verse 15 and CUL, Or. 420, verse 26:

بیامد بگفت آن همه پیش دیو	ز دیوان بر آمد ز ناگه غریو
چو آگه شد از رستم نیو دیو	از ایشان بر آمد سراسر غریو

The meaning, however, remains similar and there is no obvious reason for the alteration—which in fact, to my mind, is not an improvement. A couple of other notable changes concern obscurities in Mustaufi's text; for example, his verse 23, which is not echoed in any other version, and a substantial change in the first *misra'* of his verse 35, the meaning of which is not clear, is altered to make more sense, although with rather awkward scansion, in the later copies.

Naturally, the same types of variation occur within the longer version as well.

The Manuscript Tradition

Finally, a few words are in order about the transmission of the text. First, as is clear from Table 2.3, no two versions of the longer text are exactly the same, a conclusion that seems to be corroborated by comparison with the shorter passages available to me on individual folios. Naturally, there is nothing surprising in this, and indeed not only is the mobility of the text not accidental, nor due to imprecise means of reproduction (scribal 'error', methods of copying), but can be considered deliberate and the product of the living nature of the story as preserved in an evolving manuscript tradition.¹¹²

Nevertheless, there are some very close matches, apart from the near identity of Or. 4384 and Majlis 1069, already noted.¹¹³ Another example is two manuscripts very close in date, CUL, Add. 269 (dated 1580) and Dorn 334 (dated

111 Or. 420 inserts an extra verse (78) omitted here to make the variation on Mustaufi's verses clearer.

112 On this point, see Nicols, "Textes mobiles, images motrices", 19–21.

113 Munich's Cod. pers. 10 can be added to this group.

1584), quickly followed by Oxford Ouseley 344 (dated 1601) and BL, Add. 7724 (1612). These not only have the same number of verses (118), and share a number of unique variants,¹¹⁴ but have similar rubrics placed at almost identical points in the text (see Tables 2.2, 2.3). As I have attempted to demonstrate elsewhere (and proved to my own satisfaction), the number and placement of text headings is a good indicator of a shared manuscript transmission.¹¹⁵ In that case, and in the present example of the story of Barkhiyas, the Madrid ms. of 1496 could be placed in the same group, with a picture inserted at the same point as in Dorn 334; the Doha ms. 639 (1583) is also very close to the four copies mentioned above, with similar rubrics also in similar positions (see Table 2.2).¹¹⁶ While most of these manuscripts were copied within a period of thirty years, it is worth observing that there is almost a century between them and the Madrid copy of 1496, testifying to the longevity of some of these chains.

The other 15th-century manuscripts do contain some substantial variations (as partly shown in Appendix B), each providing different readings that can be found almost interchangeably in later copies—that is, it is rare for later copies not to contain readings sometimes found in one and sometimes another. As suggested in Table 2.3, BL Or. 4384 differs from CUL Or. 420 on frequent occasions and has a few extra or missing verses; Doha 255 is more substantially different, especially in providing one entirely original passage (verses 100–103), and in general seems to be the version most closely followed by the later 17th-century copyists. It is premature at present to attempt more precise groupings, but detailed analysis of close texts might in future help to identify a date for undated manuscripts or a place of copying.

Even though the text preserved in the Baltimore manuscript (W. 600) and, with some aberrations, Diez A fol. 1, is comfortably longer than any other, it does not contain a few lines found in other earlier versions, and some later versions add more lines, notably the text in the National Library of Russia, PNS 64, which has a few verses not found elsewhere and otherwise shows some close parallels with I.O. Islamic 133 (dated 1560).¹¹⁷

114 See above, nn. 27, 64.

115 Melville, “Rubrics and chapter headings”; the oral presentations of which have been greeted with some scepticism!

116 I do not have the full text of either the Madrid ms. II, 3218 or Doha 639 at my disposal, but the congruence is striking in those illustrated passages for which I have copies.

117 PNS 64, 22 is one of the few to follow I.O. Islamic 133, 21, also in I.O. Islamic 3540; and the following verse is also the same in these copies. We may also note a very close relationship between PNS 64 and another undated 17th-century ms., Munich, Cod. pers. 11, which have the same number of lines, share some unique verses (84, 101), place the rubrics at the same point (cf. Table 2.2) and the paintings at the same break-line. Cod. pers. 11 (not tabulated on Table 2.3) is also part of the same group that tends to follow Doha 255.

TABLE 2.2 *Text rubrics for the story of Barkhiyas Div*

This table lists the headings used either to introduce the interpolation or to mark moments of the unfolding story. Where two or more manuscripts follow identical wording or the same set of headings (i.e. have more than one similar heading), they are grouped together. The placement of these headings is indicated in Table 2.3 by the use of bold figures.

Manuscript (in rough chronological order)	Rubric
Mustaufi, BL, Or. 2833	جنگ رستم با برخياس و کشته شدن برخياس
CUL, Or. 420	رزم رستم با پسر اکوان ديو را (<i>sic</i>)
BL, Or. 4384	رزم رستم با [پسر] اکوان
Doha 255	کشتن رستم برخياس پسر اکوان ديو را
Madrid, II. 3218	آمدن رستم بسر چاه وزدن او با ديوان اندر کشتن رستم برخياس پسر اکوان ديو و گريختن ديوان لشکرش رزم رستم با ديوان برخياس
BL, I.O. Islamic 133; BL, I.O. Islamic 3540	رزم رستم با برخياس پسر اکوان ديو
CUL, Add. 269; BOD, Ouseley 344; BL, Add. 7724	[گفتار اندر] رزم برخياس پسر اکوان ديو با رستم [گفتار اندر] کشتن رستم برخياس [پسر اکوان ديو] [گفتار اندر] کشتن رستم ديوان لشکر برخياس
Doha 639 (has problems spelling Barkhiyas)	رزم برخياوس ديو با رستم (<i>sic</i>) کشتن رستم [بر]خياس ديو را کشتن رستم ديوان را

Manuscript (in rough chronological order)	Rubric
NLR, Dorn 334	رزم دیو با رستم کشتن رستم برخیا پسر اکوان دیو رفتن رستم بسر چاه بیژن کشتن رستم دیوان
NLR, PNS 90	جنگ کردن رستم با پسر اکوان دیو
BNF, Suppl. persan 490	جنگ کردن پسر اکوان دیو با رستم در سر چاه
NYPL, Spencer Pers. 2 ^a ; Paris, Smith-Lesouëf 248	رزم رستم با ترجمان برخیا پسر اکوان دیو (<i>sic</i>)
NYPL, Spencer Pers. 3	گفتار اندر کشتن رستم برخیا پسر اکوان دیو
NYPL, Spencer Pers. 13	آمدن رستم بر سر چاه بیژن ورزم کردن با رخیا (<i>sic</i>) پسر اکوان دیو
NLR, Dorn 333	رفتن رستم با منیژه بر سر چاه بیژن و رسیدن برخیا پسر اکوان دیو جنگ کردن رستم دستان با پسر خیا (<i>sic</i>) پسر اکوان دیو و کشته شدن او
NLR, PNS 64; Munich, Cod. pers. 11 and Budapest, Perzsca F3 have	وی آمدن رستم بسر چاه بیژن و نبرد او با برخیا دیو
NYPL, Spencer M&A Pers. 2	آمدن رستم برای کشتن اکوان دیورا (<i>sic</i>)

a NYPL omits the word 'Barkhiyas'. 'Tarjuman' thus appears to be a scribal misreading that was followed in the Paris ms.

TABLE 2.3 *A concordance of the verses of the story of Barkhiyas in the manuscripts studied*

Bold type: the placement of a rubric at this point.
Shaded boxes: the placement of a picture at this point.^a
Single apostrophe: a notable variation compared with earlier (previous) versions.
Double apostrophes: a substantial variation in wording or end-rhyme.

BL Or.	CUL Or.	BL Or.	Doha	Walters	BL IOI	CUL	NLR	Berlin
2833	420	4384	255	600	133	Add	Dorn	Diez
						269	334	
1334	1437	c. 1440	1485	1510	1560	1580	1584	1593
1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
4			4'			4	4	
			5			5	5	
5	4	4	6	4	4	6	8	4
	5	7	9	5	5	9	9	6
	6		8		6	8	7	
6		5		6				5
7	7'	8	7	7	7	7'	6	7
8	8'	6	10	8	8	10	10	8
	9	9	11'	9	9	11	11	
	10	10	12	10	10'	12	12	9
	11	11	13	11	11	13	13	10
						14	14	
	12	12	14'	12	12	15	15	11
	13	13	15	13	13	16	16	12
		14	16 ^b	14				13
	14	15'	17	15	14	17	17	14
	15	16	18	16	15	18	18	15
	16	17	19	17	16	19	19	16
	17	18	20	18	17	20	20	17
	18	19	21'	19	18	21	21	18
	19	20	22	20	19'	22	22	19
	20	21	23'	21	20	23	23	20
					21			
	21	22'	24	22	'22'	24	25	21
	22	23'	25'	23	23	25	24	22

a Note that not all mss with paintings are included in this Table.

Munich Cod Pers 10 16th c	BOD Ous. 344 1601	Walters 602 1617	Walters 601 ^a 1618	NLR Dorn 333 1651	NLR PNS 64 17th c	NLR PNS 381 17th c	BOD Ous. Add 176 17th c?
1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
	4	4	4	4	4	4	
	5	5	5	5	5	5	
4	6	6	6	6	6	6	4
7	9	9	9	9	9	9	5
	8	8	8	8	8	8	
5							6
6	7	7	7	7	7	7	7
8	10	10	10	10	10	10	8
9	11			11	11	11	9
10	12	11	11	12	12	12	10
11	13	12		13	13	13	11
	14		12				
12	15	13	13	14	14	14	12
13	16	14	14	15	15	15	13
14							14
15	17	15	15	16	16	16	15
16	18	16	16	17	17	17	16
17	19	17	17	18	18	18	17
18	20	18	18	19	‘19’	19	18
19	21	19	19	20	20’	20	19
20	22	20	20	21	21	21	20
21	23	21’		22			21
					22		
22	24	22	21’	23	23	22	22
23	25		22	24	24		23

TABLE 2.3 *A concordance of the verses of the story of Barkhiyas in the manuscripts (cont.)*

BL Or.	CUL Or.	BL Or.	Doha	Walters	BL 101	CUL	NLR	Berlin
2833	420	4384	255	600	133	Add 269	Dorn 334	Diez
1334	1437	c. 1440	1485	1510	1560	1580	1584	1593
9	23'	24	26	24	24	26	26	23
10	24'	25	27'	25	25	27	27	24
11								
	25				26			
			28			28	28	
12		'26'		26				25
13		'27'		27				26
14		28'		28				27
		c29						d
15	'26'	30		29	27			31
16	27	31	29	30	28	29	29	32
17	28	32	30'	31	29	30	30	33
18	29	33	31	32	30	31	31	34
	30	34	32	33	31'	32	32	35
	31	35	33	34	32	33	33	36
	32	36'	34'	35	33'	34	34	37
	33	37	35	36		35	35	38
	34	38	36	37	34	36	36	39
	35	39	37'	38	'35'	37	37	40
19	36'	40	38	39	'36'	38	38	41
20	37	41	39	40	37	39	39	42
21	38	42	40'	41	38	40	40	43
22	39'	43	41'	42	39	41	41	44
23								
24	40	44	42'	43	40	42	42	45
25	41'	45'	43	44	41	43	43'	46
26	42	46	44	45	42	44	44	47
27	43	47	45	46	43	45	45	48
28	44'	48'	46	47		46	46	49
	45	49	47	48	44	47	47	50'
	46	50'	48	49	45	48	48	

Munich Cod Pers 10 16th c	BOD Ous. 344 1601	Walters 602 1617	Walters 601 1618	NLR Dorn 333 1651	NLR PNS 64 17th c	NLR PNS 381 17th c	BOD Ous. Add 176 17th c?
24	26		23	25	25		24
25	27	23		26			25
	28	24	24	27		23	
26							29
27							30
28							31
^e 29							
30							26
31	29	25	25	28	'26'	24	27
32	30	26	26	29		25	28
33	31	27	27	30	27	26	32
					28		
34	32	28	28	31	29'	27	33
35	33	29	29	32	30	28	34
36	34	30'	30	33	31	29	35
37	35	31	31	34	32	30	36
38	36	32	32	35	33	31	
39	37	33	33	36	34	32	37
40	38	34	34	37	35	33	38
41	39	35	35	38	36	34	39
42	40	36	36	39	37	35	40'
43	41	37'	37	40	38	36	41
44	42	38	38	41	39'	37	42
45	43	39	39	42	40	38	43
46	44	40	40	43	41	39	44
47	45	41	41	44	42		45
48	46	42	42	45	43		46
49	47	43	43	46'	44	40	47
50	48	44		47	45'	41	48

TABLE 2.3 *A concordance of the verses of the story of Barkhiyas in the manuscripts (cont.)*

BL Or.	CUL Or.	BL Or.	Doha	Walters	BL 101	CUL	NLR	Berlin
2833	420	4384	255	600	133	Add 269	Dorn 334	Diez
1334	1437	c. 1440	1485	1510	1560	1580	1584	1593
29	47	51	49'	50	46	49	49'	51
30	48'	52	50	51	47	50	50	52
31	49	53	51	52'	48	51	51	53
32	50'	54	52'	53	49	52'	52'	54
	51	55'	53	54	50'	53'	53'	62
	52	56'	54'	55	51'	54'	54	63
	53	57	55'	56	52	55'	55	61
	54	58	56	57	53	56	56	55
	55	'59' f	57	58	54	57	57	56
33	56'	60	58	59	55	58	58	57
34	57	61	59	60	56	59	59	58
	58	62	60	61	57	60	60	59
	59	63	61	62	58	61	61	60
								64
	60	64	62	63	59	62	62	65
	61	65	63	64	60	63	63	66
	62	66'	64	65	61	64	64	67
	63	67'	65'	66	62'	65	65	68
								69
	64		66		63	66	66	
35	65'	68	67	67	64	67	67	70
36	66'	69	68	68	65'	68	68	71
	67	70'	69'	69	66	69	69	
37	68'	71	70	70	67	70	70	72
38	69'	72	71	71	68	71	71	73
39	70	73	72'	72	69	72	72	74
40	71	74	73	73	70	73	73	75

Munich Cod Pers 10 16th c	BOD Ous. 344 1601	Walters 602 1617	Walters 601 1618	NLR Dorn 333 1651	NLR PNS 64 17th c	NLR PNS 381 17th c	BOD Ous. Add 176 17th c?
51	49	45'	44	48	46	42	49
52	50	46	45	49	47	43	50
53	51	47	46	50	48	44	51
54	52	48	47	51	49	45	52
55	53	49'	48	52	50	46	53
56	54	50	49	53	51	47	54
57	55	51	50	54	52	48	55
58	56	52	51	55	53	49	56
59	57	53	52	56	54	50	57
60	58	54	53	57	55	51	58
61	59	55	54	58	56	52	59
62	60	56	55	59	57	53	60
63	61	57	56	60	58	54	61
64	62	58	57	61	59	55	62'
66*	63	59	58	62	60	56	63
67	64	60'	59'	63	61	57	64
68	65	61	60	64	62	58	65'
							66
	66	62		65	63	59	
69	67	63		66	64	60	67
70	68	64	61	67	65	61	68
71	69	65		68	66	62	69'
72	70	66		69	67	63	70
73	71	67		70	68	64	71
					69		
					70		
					71		
					72		
74	72	68	62'	71	73	65	72
75	73	69	63'	72	74	66	73

TABLE 2.3 *A concordance of the verses of the story of Barkhiyas in the manuscripts (cont.)*

BL Or.	CUL Or.	BL Or.	Doha	Walters	BL 101	CUL	NLR	Berlin
2833	420	4384	255	600	133	Add 269	Dorn 334	Diez
1334	1437	c. 1440	1485	1510	1560	1580	1584	1593
41	72'	75	74	74	71	74	74	76
				75	72			
	73	76	75	76	73	75	75	77
42	74'	77	76	77	75	76	76	78
43	75'	78	77	78	74	77	77	79
	76	79	78	79	76	78	78	80
44	'77'	80	79	80	77	79	79	81
	78		80	81	78	80	80	
45	'79'	81	81'	82	79	81	81	82
	80	82	82	83	80	82	82	83
	81	83	83	84	81	83	83	84
	82	84	84'	85	83	84	84	85
	83	85	85	86	82'	85	85	86
					84			
					85			
					86			
					87			
	84	86	86	87	88	86	86	87
	85	87	87	88	89	87	87	88
				89	90'			
				90				89
				91				90
				92				91
				93				92'
				94				93
				95				94
				96				95
				97				96'
				98				97
				99				98
46	'86'	88	88	100	91'	88	88	99'

Munich Cod Pers 10 16th c	BOD Ous. 344 1601	Walters 602 1617	Walters 601 1618	NLR Dorn 333 1651	NLR PNS 64 17th c	NLR PNS 381 17th c	BOD Ous. Add 176 17th c?
76	74	70	64'	73	75 76	67	74
77	75	71	65	74		68	75
78	76	72	66	75	77	69	
79	77	73	67	76		70	77'
80	78	74	68	77		71	76
81	79 80	75 76	69	78 79		72 73	78
82	81	77	70	80	78	74	79*
83	82	78	71	81	79	75	80
84	83	79	72	82	80	76	81
85	84	80	73	83	81	77	82
86	85	81	74	84	82	78	83
87	86	82	75	85	83 84	79	84
88	87	83	76	86	85	80	85
89	88	84	77	87	86	81	86

TABLE 2.3 *A concordance of the verses of the story of Barkhiyas in the manuscripts (cont.)*

BL Or.	CUL Or.	BL Or.	Doha	Walters	BL 101	CUL	NLR	Berlin
2833	420	4384	255	600	133	Add 269	Dorn 334	Diez
1334	1437	c. 1440	1485	1510	1560	1580	1584	1593
	87	89	89	101'	92	89	89	100
47	88'	90	90	102	93	90	90	101
48	89	91	91	103	94	91	91	102
49	90'	92	92	104	95	92	92	103
50	91	93	93	105	96	93	93	104'
	92	94	94	106'		94	94	105
51	93	95	95	107		95	95	106
52	94	96	96	108		96	96	107
53	95	97	97'	109'		97	97	108'
				110				109
				111				110
				112				111
				113				
				114				112
				115				113
				116				114
				117				115
				118				116
	96	98	98	119'		98'	98	117
	97	99	99'	120		99	99	118
			100			100	100	
			101			101	101	
			102			102	102	
			103			103'	103	
						104	104	
						105	105	
	98	100	104		97	106	106	
54	99'	101'	105	121		107	107	120
55	100	102	106	122		108	108	119
56	101	103	107	123	98	109	109	121
57	102	104	108	124	99	110	110	122
58	103'	105'	109	125	100	111	111	123

Munich Cod Pers 10 16th c	BOD Ous. 344 1601	Walters 602 1617	Walters 601 1618	NLR Dorn 333 1651	NLR PNS 64 17th c	NLR PNS 381 17th c	BOD Ous. Add 176 17th c?
90	89	85		88	87	82	87
91	90	86	78	89	88	83	88
92	91	87	79	90	89	84	89
93	92	88	80	91	90	85	90
94	93	89	81	92	91	86	91
95	94	90	82	93	92	87	92
96	95	91	83	94	93	88	93
97	96	92	84	95	94	89	94
98	97	93	85'	96	95	90	95
99	98	94'		97	96	91	96
100	99	95	86	98	97	92	97'
	100	96		99	98	93	
	101	97		100	99	94	
	102	98		101	100	95	
	103	99		102	'101'	96	
	104						
	105						
101	106	100	87	103	102	97	
102	107	101	88	104	103	98	
103	108	102	89	105	104	99	97'
104	109	103	90	106	105	100	98
105	110	104	91	107	106	101	99
106	111	105	92	108	107	102	100

TABLE 2.3 *A concordance of the verses of the story of Barkhiyas in the manuscripts (cont.)*

BL Or.	CUL Or.	BL Or.	Doha	Walters	BL 101	CUL	NLR	Berlin
2833	420	4384	255	600	133	Add 269	Dorn 334	Diez
1334	1437	c. 1440	1485	1510	1560	1580	1584	1593
59	104'	106	110	126	101	112	112	124
	105	107	111	127	102	113	113	125
	106	108	112	128	103	114	114	126
	107	109	113	129	104	115	115	127
	108	110	114'	130	105	116	116	128
60	109'	111	115'	131	106'	117	117	129
61	110	112	116	132	107	118	118	130

- a W. 601 has extra verses at the start of the episode, not yet found elsewhere, which help the transition to the story of Barkhiyas (see p. 45). The normative start is taken as verse 1.
- b Doha 255, v. 16 repeats v. 14 (scribal error)
- c Or. 4384, v. 29 and Cod. pers. 10, v. 29 almost duplicate v. 25, as does Majlis 1096. Similarly, Diez A fol. 1, vs. 29-31 essentially duplicate v. 25-27 (scribal errors).
- d Or. 4384, v. 59, Majlis 1069 and Cod. pers. 10, v. 59 almost duplicate v. 54.
- e Cod. pers. 10, v. 66 repeats v. 63 (scribal error).
- f W. 601, v. 96 repeats v. 95 (scribal error).

Conclusions

We have drawn attention to the story of Barkhiyas Div, interpolated into the episode of Bizhan and Manizha. The story is clearly an old one and appears in the surviving manuscript tradition from an early date, being part of Hamd-Allah Mustaufi's edition of the *Shahnama* of 1334. It retained this popularity into the 19th century, during which time it was quite often illustrated with a painting generally close to the critical verse, either of Barkhiyas attacking Rustam with a rock, or more usually being cut in half by a blow of Rustam's sword. Apart from giving its audience another chance to hear of Rustam's demon-killing exploits, it provides a sequel to the previous episode of Akvan Div and serves as a diversion, one might say a quasi-comic interlude, to delay the dénouement of the main narrative, as Rustam reaches the pit where Bizhan

Munich Cod Pers 10 16th c	BOD Ous. 344 1601	Walters 602 1617	Walters 601 1618	NLR Dorn 333 1651	NLR PNS 64 17th c	NLR PNS 381 17th c	BOD Ous. Add 176 17th c?
107	112	106	93	109	108	103	101
108	113	107	94	110	109	104	102
109	114	108	95f	111	110	105	103
110	115	109	97	112	111	106	104
111	116	110	98	113	112	107	105
112	117'	111	99	114	113	108	106'
113	118	112	100	115	114	109	107

is interred, prior to hauling him out: the high point and purpose of the whole story, as clearly recognised by the substantial number of illustrations to this key scene.¹¹⁸

The effort to tabulate the different versions of the Barkhiyas story shows just how fluid is the text, with substantial additions being made at regular intervals, first in the early 15th century, again at the outset of the 16th century and at various points in the 17th century. This not only testifies to the vitality of the story, but also provides an example of the complexity of the textual transmission that applies equally well to the text of the *Shahnama* as a whole. At the same time, similarities in the variations between texts and in their rubrics does suggest the possibility of establishing some lines of transmission and grouping of copies, which might be helpful for identifying the date or place of production of unassigned manuscripts.

¹¹⁸ See 192 paintings to date, at <http://shahnama.caret.cam.ac.uk/new/jnama/card/cescene:138166603>, on 31 August 2013, not counting other depictions of immediately adjacent moments in the rescue scene.

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Appendix A

The Barkhiyas interpolation in Mustaufi, BL ms. Or. 2833 (composed in 1334, copied in 1405), ff. 295v–296v.

که با چاره و مکر و افسون بدند	در آن گه بسی دیو وارون بدند
با ندام و ناخن بسان پلنگ	گروهی سر و دستشان چون نهنگ
فرو هشته گیسو بسون کند	گروهی بتن موی چون گوسفند
گروهی چو خرگوش با گوش و دم	گروهی چو استر بدست و بسم
بقامت دراز و بچهره سیاه	بر ایشان یکی دیو بد پادشاه
که رستم بگزر گران کشته بود	هم او پور اکوان سر گشته بود
که از سهم او بد بدلها هراس	مرین دیورا نام بد برخياس
کز و باز جویم کین کهن	زرستم شب و روز گفتی سخن
بکردار آتش دلش بر دمید	چو آن آتش تیز روشن بدید
درین تیره شب بانگ و فریاد چیست	پرسید کین آتش و باد چیست
نرفتی زیرامنش یک زمان	که بر چاه بیژن بد او پاسبان
بنزدیک آتش بکردار دود	بیامد یکی دیو چون باد زود
تهمن که بر چرخ کردی گذر	بدید آن پرو بازوی شیر نر
یکایک بدید و سراسر شمرد	همان نامور پهلوان هفت گرد

- ۱۵ پیامد بگفت آن همه پیش دیو
 شهنشاه دیوان ز جای نشست
 پیامد بنزدیک رستم رسید
 یکی بانگ بر زد برستم که کوه
 نگه کرد رستم یکی کوه دید
 بچهره سیاه و بالا بلند
 ۲۰ دهن همچو غاری ز هم کرده باز
 دو چشمش چو دو کاسه خون شده
 همان ملبسش همچو خرپشته (ای)
 چو سوزن همی موی پیشش تیز
 ۲۵ چهل رش فزون بود بالای او
 گره در گره موی در هم شده
 کبوتر درو جایگه ساختی
 نبود از آن دیو را آگهی
 تهمتن بدو در شگفتی بماند
 ۳۰ کزین سان یکی دیورا آفرید
 همی بود تا دیو نزدیک شد
 بدان دیو گفت ای بد بد نژاد
 منم رستم زال سام دلیر
 بسی جنگ دیدم بهر انجن
 ۳۵ همانا که از سوار رطون آمدی
 بدو گفت دیو کای گو نامور
 ترا من بدین سنگ بیجان کنم
 بخوادم ز تو من کنون کین باب
 بگفت و در آمد بسان پلنگ
 ۴۰ تهمتن سپر بر سر آورد زود
 سپر در سرش خود بر هم شکست
 برخش دلاور بیفشارد ران
- ز دیوان بر آمد ز ناگه غریو
 یکی کوه بر کند واز جای جست
 خروشی چو شیر ژیان بر کشید
 بلرزید و از هول آن شد ستوه
 که بر سان آتش همی بر دمید
 باندام بر موی چون گوسفند
 دو دندان پیشش بسان گراز
 کزو غار پیشش چو هامون شده
 که در وی بدی جایگه بسته (ای)
 ز بس خشم و آهنگ و کین و ستیز
 ده و پنج رش بود پهنای او
 شکنجش چو ماران ارقم شده
 ز مویش همی گردن افراختی
 که مغزش ز دانش بدی خود تی
 همی پهلوان نام یزدان بخواند
 که چشم زمانه بدین سان ندید
 بچشمش جهان پاک تاریک شد
 همانا که نامم نداری بیاد
 نترسم من از جنگ یک دشت شیر
 بسی دیورا کنده ام سر ز تن
 که ایدر بجنم دوان آمدی
 گراز چرخ گردان تو کردی گذر
 بدین جایگه زار و بیجان کنم
 بخت جهاندار افراسیاب
 بینداخت بر پهلوان خاره سنگ
 چو سنگ اندر آمد بگردار دود
 سر و یال رستم ز زخمش بخت
 بگردن بر آورد گرز گران

/f.296r/

/f. 296v/

- ز دیو دمنده بر آمد غریو
سبک دست زین تیغ پولاد برد
بکردار مرغ هوا بر پرید
تهمتن سوی فرق سر برد تیغ
جهان از آن دیو بی بیم شد
بخون و بخاک اندر آغشته دید
بخاک سیه فرق سر بر نهاد
تو دادی مرا فرو زور و هنر
نبودی مرین دیورا هم همال
همان اختر و چرخ گردان تراست
گرفتند آن هفت گرد آفرین
دل شاه گیتی بتو شاد باد
بزور و بمردی بفر و هنر
عنان تکاور بیاید بسود
بلند آسمان بر زمین آورید
بکردار مرغان سرانشان پرید
از ایشان نبودی بهر جا گذار
پسانگه سوی چاه بیژن براند
چو آن سنگ را بر سر چاه دید
- بزد بر سر و مغز آن نره دیو
گمانش چنان بود رستم که مرد
چو دیو دمان تیغ رستم بدید
ز بالا بر آمد بکردار میغ
ز سر تا پایش بدو نیم شد
تهمتن چو آن دیو را کشته دید
فروید آمد از رخس برسان باد
به یزدان چنین گفت کای دادگر
وگر نه دو صد مرد چون پور زال
بنیک و ببد حکم و فرمان تراست
تهمتن چو رخ بر گرفت از زمین
که گیتی ز نام تو آباد باد
نباشد بگیتی چو تو نامور
بدیشان چنین گفت رستم که زود
بدین نره دیوان بکین آورید
خود و سرکشان سوی دیوان دوید
بکشتند چندانک در کوهسار
یکی را از ایشان بگیتی ثماند
بدان چاه بی بن بسی بنگرید
چنین گفت با نامور هفت گرد ...

Appendix B

The longer version of the Barkhiyas story in the 15th-century mss.¹¹⁹

- در آنجا بسی دیو وارون بدند
گروهی سرانشان بسان پلنگ
که با چاره و مکر و افسون بدند
باندام و ناخن بشکل نهنگ

119 CUL, Or. 420, ff. 219r–220r [C], BL, Or. 4384, 100r–101r [B], and Doha 255, ff. 244v–246r [D]. Only substantial departures from the basic text in C are noted.

گروهی بتن موی چون گوسفند
گروهی همه پای چون سم خر
بماند سگ داشت دندان و لنج
بد ایشان یکی دیو بد پادشاه
زرستم شب و روز در کینه بود
مر آن دیورا بود اکوان پدر
بدی نام آن دیو ز برخیا
شب و روز گفتی زرستم سخن
که او باب آن دیو ز کشته بود
همی خواست کورا بچنگ آورد
همی جست او را بسال و بماه
چو بشنید کو شد بتوران زمین
ز دیوان فرستاد دیوی براه
بیامد برش دیو دیدش تژند
چو دانست کو رفت بچان عنان
بیامد بنزدیکی برخیا
بیامد بدین چاره رستم فراز
چو بشنید فرزند اکوان سخن
همی گفت من خون او را همی
نه رستم بمانم نه گردان او
چه سنجد برم رستم زال را
چو بر گفت این اندر آمد بکین
چو رستم بیامد بنزدیک چاه
چو دیو سمگر مراورا بدید
پرسید کین شیر مردان کیند

فرو هشته گیسو بسان کند
گروهی چو خرگوش با...¹²⁰
سرون راست بد لیک اندام کنج¹²¹
ببالا دراز و بچهره سپاه
مر او را بدل کین دیرینه بود
که رستم بگزش جدا کرد سر
که از رستم او بد بدل در هراس
کزو باز جویم کین کهن
از ان کینه آن دیو سر گشته بود
ابا رستم زال جنگ آورد
چه تنها بدی و چه با وی سپاه
ابا او دلیران و گردان کین
که از رستم آرد خبر وز سپاه
ز بهرای بیژن که بودی به بند¹²²
که بیژن بر آرد زچاه غمان
بدو گفت کای شاه نیکی شناس
که بیژن رهاوند ز گرم و گداز
بجوئید از آن کینههای کهن
بریزم نباشد مرا زو غمی
نه آن نام داران و مردان او
خداوند شمشیر و کویال را
خود ونزه دیوان بجای کین
خود و پهلوانان ایران ز راه
بکردار آتش دلش بر دمید
بدین چاه سر تیره شب بر چیند

120 The text is illegible at this point. NB variant on Mustaufi, 4.

121 Only in D.

122 Only in B.

- یکی گفت کین رستم و یاوران
 بیامد یکی دیو مانند دود
 بدید آن بر و بارزوی پیلتن
 همان نامور پهلوان هفت گرد
 بیامد بگفت این همه پیش دیو
 چو آگه شد از رستم نیو دیو
 سپه‌دار دیوان ز جای نشست
 بیامد چو نزدیک رستم رسید¹²⁶
 یکی بانگ بر زد برستم که کوه
 که ای شیر دل نامور پهلوان
 هم اکنون ترا من بکین پدر
 همین هفت تن نامداران تو
 یکی را نمانم بدین دشت جنگ
 چو آواز آن دیو رستم شنید
 جهان پهلوان رستم نامدار
 مراورا بدان جوش و کینه بدید¹²⁷
 بچهره سیاه و بیلا یلند
 دهن همچو تندر زهم کرده باز
 دو چشمش چو دو چشمه خون شده
 چو سوزن همه موی او از ستیز
 دو هفتاد رش بود بالای او
 گره در گره موی در هم شده
 کبوتر درو جایگه ساخته
 نه بود ایچ آن دیو را آگهی
- همه گزداران و گندآوران¹²³
 بدانجا کجا رستم زال بود¹²⁴
 جهان پهلوان نامور تهمتن
 بدید و یکایک همه بر شمرد
 ز دیوان بر آمد بناگاه غریو¹²⁵
 از ایشان بر آمد سراسر غریو
 یکی کوه بر کند و بر پای جست
 خروشی چو شیر ژبان بر کشید
 بلرزید و از هول او شد ستوه
 سر آمد ترا روزگار روان
 بخاک اندر آرم ببرمت سر
 سواران خنجر گزاران تو
 بیرم سرت از بی نام و ننگ
 بگوش دلیران و گردان رسید
 نگه کرد در روی آن نا بکار
 که بر سان آتش همی بر دمید
 باندام بر موی چون گوسفند
 دو دندان پشین چو نشک گراز
 روان خون او همچو جیهون شده
 ز بس خشم و آهنگ چون تیغ تیز
 ده و هفت رش بود پهنای او
 شکنجش چو ماران ارقم شده
 ز مویش همی گردن افراخته
 که مغزش بد از رای و دانش تهی

123 There comes at this point in D (28) a line that makes no sense in the flow of the text, and is omitted here; it would perhaps fit more logically after v. 33 below:

تہمتن چو بشنید گفتار دیو بر آورد از جان و دل یک غریو

124 This and the next two verses are only in B, 26–28, and Majlis 1096.

125 This verse in B, 30 is clearly a variation on C, 26, retained as v. 33 here (neither is in D).

126 D, 30, first *misra*: رسید نزد دمان رستم رسید.

127 Preferring B, 40 and D, 38.

چو آن نعره هول اورا شنید
 که آن دیورا رای بر جنگ بود
 همی پهلوان نام یزدان بخواند¹²⁸
 که چشم زمانه چنان کس ندید
 بچشمش جهان پاک تاریک شد
 بگو کرکه داری تو نام و نژاد
 که کشتی تو اورا برای و بریو
 که خواهم ز تو آی یل جنگ جو
 که تا از تو یابم همه کام خویش
 بر آورد چون شیر شرزه غریو
 بشادی دگر در جهان غنوی
 نترسم ز نراژدها و ز شیر
 بسی دیورا کنده ام سر ز تن
 چه سنجه چه اولاد عندی و بید
 بکشم بتیغ و بگرز گران
 بریدم سرش چون سر گوسفند
 چه فرطوس منثور با دست برد
 چه سگسار و چنگش چه خاقان چین
 چه انبوه لشکر که گیرو دار
 شده فاش نامم بهر انجن
 که اکنون بجنم دلیر آمدی
 گراز چرخ گردان بر اری تو سر
 بخوام نمایم هنرا بتو
 گوان ترا خوار و بیجان کنم
 زخونت کنم دشت چون رود آب
 بینداخت بر پهلوان خاره سنگ
 تهمتن سپر بر سر آورد زود
 دل پیلتن از نهیش بخت

چو رستم چنان دیو وارون بدید
 بدستش یکی آسیا سنگ بود
 تهمتن ازو در شگفتی بماند
 کزان سان یکی نره دیوآفرید
 همی بود تا دیو نزدیک شد
 بدان دیو گفت ای بد بد نژاد
 بدو گفت من پور اکوان دیو
 کنون آمدم از پای خون او
 تو برگوی نزدیک من نام خویش
 چو رستم بشنید از ان نره دیو
 بدو گفت اگر نام من بشنوی
 منم رستم زال سام دلیر
 بسی جنگ دیدم بهر انجن
 چه ارژنگ دیو و چه دیو سفید
 همه نره دیوان مازندران
 پدرت آن پر از چاره و ریو بند
 چه پولادوند و چه کاموس گرد
 چه کرکوی و چه شنگل دوربین
 چه کافور مردم خور نا بکار
 شده جملگی خوار و بیجان زمن
 همانا که از جان تو سیر آمدی
 بدو دیو گفت ای گونامور
 من امروز خون پدر را ز تو
 ترا من بدین سنگ بیجان کنم
 بخوام ز تو هم اکنون کین باب
 بگفت این و آمد بسان پلنگ
 چو سنگ اندر آمد بگردار دود
 ز زخمش سپر خرد در هم شکست

128 D, 49, intriguingly reads: زبان پهلوی نام یزدان بخواند.

بر آورد از زین عمود گران
 بکردار آتش بر آمد ز جای
 ز کینه همی رستم پهلوان
 بکردار دریا در آمد بجوش
 عنانرا برخش تکاور سپرد
 پیامد برش رستم پیلتن
 چو دیو دژم تیغ رستم بدید
 نهان گشت از رستم گرد زود
 زمانی چپ و راست را بنگرید
 خروشی بر آمد از آن پهن دشت
 بر رستم پهلوان با غریو
 بزد بر سر رستم پهلوان
 ز زخمش همی آتش اندر گرفت
 بر دیو شد همچو تابنده میغ
 بگفتا منم رستم گرزدار
 ز مرگش جهانگیر بی بیم شد
 بخاک و بخون اندر آغشته دید
 بخاک سیه روی خود بر نهاد
 تو دادی مرا زور و فر و هنر
 فگندم مراورا تن اندر مغاک
 نبودی مرا این دیو نرزا همال
 همان اختر چرخ گردان تراست
 گرفتند آن هفت یل آفرین
 جهان پهلوان در جهان آفرید
 نیابند در رزم و در کین گذر
 که کینه از وی نیابد رها¹²⁹
 گریزان ز جنگ تهمتن بود
 که گردد برمدی مراورا همال

سراسیمه شد رستم پهلون
 برخش دلاور بیفشارد پای
 بزد بر سر دیو گرز گران
 ز دیو دمنده بر آمد خروش
 گان آنچنان برد رستم که مرد
 دگر ره بجنید بر خویشتن
 سبک تیغ تیز از نیان برکشید
 بروی هوا شد بکردار دود
 چو رستم نگه کرد اورا ندید
 چو یکدم بدان پهلوان بر گذشت
 در آمد دگر باره آن زره دیو
 بدستش درختی چو گرز گران
 سپر پهلوان زد و بر سر گرفت
 تهمتن بر آورد رخسند تیغ
 بزد بر سرش تیغ زهر آب دار
 ز سر تا میانش بدو نیم شد
 تهمتن چو آن دیو را کشته دید
 فرود آمد از رخس برسان باد
 بیزدان چنین گفت کالی دادگر
 که کردم چنین دیو وارون هلاک
 اگر نه دو صد مرد چون پور زال
 به نیک و به بد حکم فرمان تراست
 تهمتن چو رخ بر گرفت از زمین
 بدان دادگر کین جهان آفرید
 کزو دیو جنگی و شیران نر
 بجنگش چه دیو و چه نراژدها
 اگر شرق تا غرب دشمن بود
 ندید هیچکس در جهان پور زال

129 This and the next three verses only in D, 100–103 (and Munich, Cod. pers. 11).

بدستش نیز سپرد اورا بید ¹³⁰	بجز گرد سهراب کز تخم خود
که بی تو مبادا کلاه و نگین	گرفتند از آن پس بدو آفرین
جهانرا بنام تو آباد باد	دل شاه گیتی پر از داد باد
بزور و بمردی بفر و هنر	نباشد بگیتی چو تو نامور
عنان تکاور بیاید بسود	بایشان چنین گفت رستم که زود
بلند آسمان بر زمین آورید	بدین نره دیوان بکین آورید
چو ابر بهاران غریوان شدند	خود و سرکشان سوی دیوان شدند
که ره تنگ شد بر در و دشت و غار	بکشتند چندان در آن کوهسار
چو دیوان بدیدند دادند پشت	دو بهره از آن نره دیوان بکشت
همه دشت ازیشان چو دریای خون	برفتند پویان بکوه اندرون
چو آتش که بر خیزد از خشک نی	برفتند گردان ایران ز پی
تو گفتی که بودند کوه و کمر	ندیدند ازیشان بجایی اثر
تهمتن سوی چاه بیژن براند	ز دیوان چو آنجای برکس ثماند
مر آن سنگ را بر سر چاه دید	بدان چاه بی بن بسی بگرید
	چنین گفت با نامور هفت گرد ...

130 The reading is unclear; later versions have variants that do not much help.

Rustam's Grandson in Central Asia: The Sistan Cycle Epics and the *Shahnama* Tradition

Gabrielle van den Berg

A substantial part of the *Shahnama* deals with the heroes of Sistan, in particular Rustam, who is a central figure especially in the large episodes on the legendary Iranian kings Kay Kavus and Kay Khusrau. Firdausi's mastery in combining the stories of the kings of Iran with stories on the champions of Sistan no doubt greatly enhanced the success of the *Shahnama*. Stories of Rustam, the most famous hero of Sistan, certainly predate the *Shahnama*, though the exact nature of this epic material is obscure. Firdausi used material from this existing cycle of stories on the heroes of Sistan for his *Shahnama*, and by doing so immortalised Rustam and his family. However, it appears that Firdausi did not include all of the epic material circulating at his time.

Other poets, such as Asadi Tusi, the author of the *Garshaspnama*, are believed to have made use of the remaining material that may have continued to circulate in order to compose new epics or to elaborate on the episodes of Firdausi's *Shahnama*. Alternatively, they invented additional stories on the basis of the Sistan stories as presented in the *Shahnama*. Over the centuries, these new stories, linked thematically to the *Shahnama*, were incorporated into *Shahnama* manuscripts and gradually came to be regarded as part of the original corpus as composed by Firdausi. By the inclusion of this epic material, the *Shahnama* grew by many thousands of verses. Later manuscripts of the *Shahnama* are significantly larger than the early manuscripts: an example of such an 'extended' *Shahnama* is Or. 2926 in the BL, dating from the early 19th century.¹

Many of the later *Shahnama* manuscripts containing extra material originate in India, where the *Shahnama* was a popular epic, especially since the establishment of the Mughal Empire in the 16th century. The British presence in India led to an increased interest in Persian in Europe, Persian being the administrative language of the Mughal Empire. The Mughal emperors cherished Persian literature, and many *Shahnama* manuscripts were manufactured

1 See the description by Ch. Rieu, *Supplement to the catalogue of Persian manuscripts in the British Museum*, 129–32.

in India.² By the 19th century, however, British rule was firmly established and the power of the Mughal emperors was waning.

Shahnama manuscripts found their way to British officials and scholars and this ultimately resulted in the appearance of one of the first critical editions of the *Shahnama* by a captain named Turner Macan. Though still far from excluding as much material as the later critical editors of the *Shahnama*, Turner Macan was aware or was made aware of the abundance of extra epic material in the *Shahnama*. He decided to discard this additional material from the text and to put it into appendices.³

Later editors, amongst whom most notably Djalal Khaleghi-Motlagh, based themselves on the earliest preserved manuscripts and removed many more spurious verses and episodes, perhaps most famously the episode of Rustam and the white elephant, a story of the young Rustam. Khaleghi-Motlagh proved that this episode was a later insertion and banned it to the footnotes of his now authoritative *Shahnama* edition.⁴

The first attempts to manufacture a critical edition of the *Shahnama* coincided with the introduction of printing in Iran and other Persianate countries, most notably India, and the critical edition of Turner Macan served as a model for the lithographed editions of the *Shahnama* that were disseminated in India and Iran in the 19th and early 20th century.⁵ The appearance of critical editions together with the introduction of printing and the subsequent end of the manuscript tradition effectively ended the distribution of epic material that had formed part of the *Shahnama* tradition for many centuries.

The additional epics eventually became forgotten and neglected. For a long time, *Shahnama* scholars focused more on the origins and what was deemed to be the original version of the *Shahnama* than on its evolution and development in the manuscript tradition, thereby practically denying the fact that the *Shahnama* constituted a living tradition—had this not been the case, the *Shahnama* would probably not have become famous as the Iranian national epic. Only in recent times a renewed interest in the added epic material has resulted in detailed research into the nature and background of the variant forms of this material.

2 See e.g. Sunil Sharma, "The production of Mughal Shahnamas. Imperial, sub-imperial, and provincial manuscripts", 86–107.

3 Abū l-Qāsim Firdawsī, *The Shah Nameh: an heroic poem, containing the history of Persia from Kioomurs to Yesdejird*, ed. Turner Macan.

4 Abu'l-Qasem Ferdowsi, *The Shah Nameh: The Book of Kings*, ed. by Djalal Khaleghi-Motlagh.

5 As discussed by Marjolijn van Zutphen, "Lithographed editions of Firdawsī's Shāhnāma", 65–101.

That the *Shahnama* is a living tradition can also be demonstrated by its presence in the oral traditions of the Persianate world. The oral background of the *Shahnama* itself has been subject of recent research,⁶ but not much attention has been paid to the position and representation of the additional epic material in oral traditions related to the *Shahnama*. It is quite obvious, however, that additional epic material not only found its way into the written *Shahnama* tradition, but also and perhaps even more so into the oral traditions of the *Shahnama*. One might even argue that this added material in fact originates in an oral tradition and found its way into the written tradition subsequently.

However that may be, it is widely recognised that alongside the *Shahnama* manuscript tradition an oral *Shahnama* tradition existed and to some extent still exists. This oral tradition is difficult to trace and not very well documented: what has not been committed to paper or tape is inevitably lost. The popularity of storytelling and poetry recitation has diminished gradually in the 20th century due to the appearance of new forms of entertainment. Within these, the *Shahnama* came up again in a different manner—but that falls outside the scope of this paper.

The oral tradition that was once kept alive by storytellers in coffeehouses and on market-places has dwindled, and nowadays the storytelling tradition in Iran is kept alive only through the efforts of a handful of people who try to preserve what is left of this tradition in new settings: in theatres rather than in coffeehouses, by cultural organisations supported by the state rather than by donations of the public and by the help of patrons.⁷

Fortunately, some material of this once flourishing oral tradition has come down to the present time via *tumars*, the 'notebooks' of Iranian storytellers who based themselves on *Shahnama* material.⁸ A small number of these notebooks have been published and provide some insight into the oral tradition as it existed in Iran. In this storytelling tradition, known as *naqqali*, the *Shahnama* storyline and the *Shahnama* kings and heroes served as a basis for elaborate stories, told in prose and interspersed with poetry. The Sistani heroes are the main figures in this tradition.

In the Persianate world outside Iran, the *Shahnama* served similarly as a source of inspiration for storytellers. Amongst the Persian-speaking Tajiks in Boysun, in present day Uzbekistan, a storytelling tradition is kept alive by

6 Kumiko Yamamoto, *The oral background of Persian epics*; Olga Davidson, *Poet and hero in the Persian Book of Kings*.

7 As discussed by Evangelos Venetis, *The Shahnama tradition. Storytelling in contemporary Iran*.

8 See Kumiko Yamamoto's contribution in this volume.

generations of storytellers. Their stories focus on the hero Barzu, who is presented as a son or a grandson of Rustam. The subject of this chapter is the role of the story of Barzu in the storytelling tradition of Boysun in Uzbekistan, and the background of the story of Barzu in the *Shahnama* tradition as a whole.⁹

The Book on Barzu or *Barzunama*

It can be safely assumed that a hero by the name of Barzu or Burzu (Borzu), as he is named alternatively, does not occur in the *Shahnama* as composed by Firdausi. The oldest manuscripts do not include stories on Barzu, and it is not in all manuscripts that we find his story. From the 15th century onwards, however, we see that the epic poem on Barzu is often inserted into *Shahnama* manuscripts. Apart from that, a number of independent *Barzunama* manuscripts are known, of which the oldest dates back to AD 1425.¹⁰

It has been proposed that the *Barzunama* dates from the 11th century and has been composed by a poet named 'Ata'i. However, both the date of its composition and of its authorship remain a matter of debate, although it seems certain now that the attribution to a poet named 'Ata'i is false.¹¹ In the oldest manuscript, reference is made to an unknown poet named Maulana Shams al-Din Kausaj or Kusaj.¹²

The title *Barzunama* covers a number of versions all dealing with the hero Barzu, who is in most cases presented as the son of Suhrab and the grandson of Rustam. The *Barzunama* can be seen as part of the epic material added to the *Shahnama*. Within this added material, separate epic poems can be discerned, which have often been described as 'later epics' or 'secondary epics', thereby emphasizing their dependence on the *Shahnama*. An alternative and less pejorative term for this group of epics is 'Persian Epic Cycle'.¹³

A Persian Epic Cycle poem typically deals with a hero from Sistan, one of the ancestors or descendants of Rustam.¹⁴ This hero may or may not figure in the

9 For the storytelling tradition on Barzu in Boysun, see Ravshan Rahmoni and Gabrielle van den Berg, *The Story of Barzu as told by two storytellers from Boysun, Uzbekistan*. On Barzu in the storytelling tradition of Iran, see: Yamamoto, *The oral background of Persian epics*, and her contribution in this volume.

10 CUL, King's Pote Ms. no. 56.

11 François de Blois, *Persian literature: A bio-bibliographical survey*, vol. v, part 2, 569; see also the edition based on this manuscript by Akbar Nahvi: *Burzunama (Bakhsh-i kuhan)*.

12 Van den Berg, "The Barzunama in the Berlin *Shahnama* manuscripts", 102.

13 A term coined by F. de Blois, "Epics", *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, 475.

14 For a detailed genealogy, see Marjolijn van Zutphen, *Farāmarz, The Sīstāni Hero*, 80.

Shahnama. Faramarz is one of the heroes who has both his own 'epic', known as the *Faramarznama*, and a role in the *Shahnama*, in contrast to Barzu, who does not play any role in what is assumed to be the text of the *Shahnama*. Until quite recently, the majority of the Persian Epic Cycle poems were not available in print.¹⁵ They could be found as interpolations in *Shahnama* manuscripts, independently in separate manuscripts, in lithographed *Shahnamas* or as independent lithographs, in storytellers' notebooks (*tumar*) and in oral performances of the *Shahnama* (a.o. *naqqali*). From these mixed sources it is clear that these epics are not fixed texts, but have been continually re-shaped and re-invented, differing greatly in scope and length.¹⁶

Judging by its frequent occurrence in *Shahnama* manuscripts, the story about Barzu must have been quite popular. Also in the prose abridgments that were made of the *Shahnama*, the story of Barzu can be usually found. The most famous prose abridgment of the *Shahnama* is without doubt the *Tarikh-i Shamshirkhani*, written in 1653 (A.H.1063) by Tavakkul Beg, a servant of Shamshir Khan, who was at the time governor of Ghazna for the Mughal emperor Shah Jahan.¹⁷

The earliest notice of this abridgment, which exists in many different manuscripts, is probably given by James Atkinson. He published one of the first English translations of the *Shahnama* in 1832, under the title: *The Sháh Námeḥ of the Persian Poet Firdausí, translated and abridged in prose and verse*. We find here also the story about Barzu, probably for the first time in English.¹⁸

In German, we find already in 1816 a translation of parts of the *Barzunama* by Hans Gottfried Ludwig Kosegarten, who used a *Barzunama* manuscript

15 Recently, scholarly editions came out of the *Burzunama*, ed. Akbar Nahvi and the *Faramarznama-yi buzurg*, ed. Marjolijn van Zutphen & Abolfazl Khatibi. An edition of the *Shabrangnama*, ed. Abolfazl Khatibi & Gabrielle van den Berg is forthcoming. For a list of editions published until 2012, see van Zutphen, *Farāmarz, The Sistāni Hero*, 735–37.

16 For a discussion of these epics see van Zutphen, *Farāmarz*, 62–144; Zabihollah Safa, *Hamasa-sara'i dar iran*, 283–342; de Blois, *Persian literature*, 562–84 and Marijan Molé, "L'Épopée iranienne après Firdosi", 377–93.

17 Sharma, "The production of Mughal Shāhnāmas", 99. On the role of the *Tarikh-i Shamshirkhani* in the history of the reception of the *Shahnama* in India, see also Pasha M. Khan, "Marvellous histories: Reading the *Shāhnāmāh* in India" and Brittany Payeur, "The Lilly Shamshir Khani in a Franco-Sikh context: A non-Islamic "Islamic" manuscript".

18 James Atkinson, *The Sháh Námeḥ of the Persian Poet Firdausí*, 217–35: 'Barzú, and his conflict with Rustem' and 'Súsen the Sorceress, and Afrásiyáb'. On the *Barzunama* in connection to the *Tarikh-i Shamshirkhani*, see van den Berg, "Two 17th-century prose renditions of the *Barzunāme*".

from Paris as his source.¹⁹ This large *Barzunama* was brought to Paris from India and had been commissioned by Anquetil-Duperron for the Library of the French king Louis Quinze in Ahmedabad in 1760.²⁰

The scope and size of the *Barzunama* differs in the manuscript tradition; as a rule, the *Barzunama* as a separate work is longer than the *Barzunamas* found interpolated in *Shahnama* manuscripts. The *Barzunama* versions interpolated in *Shahnama* manuscripts usually have between 3000 and 4000 lines; the *Barzunama* as an independent work, such as the aforementioned Parisian manuscript, may have as many as 38,000 lines or more.²¹

Both as a separate work and as an interpolation in *Shahnama* manuscripts, the story of Barzu is presented or perceived as a continuation of the episode of Suhrab and Rustam. When interpolated, the *Barzunama* can appear in different places within a *Shahnama* manuscript. Though one might expect to find a *Barzunama* interpolated after the episode of Rustam and Suhrab (and before Siyavush), it is found much more often between the episodes of Bizhan and Manizha and the Yazdah Rukh, that is later on in the *Shahnama*.

If we look at the oral tradition as reflected in the *Haft lashkar* (compiled in 1292/1875), we see that Barzu has a prominent place in the stories and that he is introduced immediately after the story of Bizhan and Manizha—in accordance with its usual position in the manuscript tradition.²²

When a *Barzunama* is interpolated in a *Shahnama* following the episode of Rustam and Suhrab, the story is like a kind of reprise of the episode just concluded. To link the preceding episode of Rustam and Suhrab with the interpolated *Barzunama*, a transition line is in most manuscripts inserted containing words to this effect: 'Now that I have finished the story on Rustam and Suhrab, I will speak about Barzu'. The story of Barzu opens by picking up an imaginary moment early on in the previous story of Rustam and Suhrab, where Suhrab is said to leave his home and take the road to Iran. However, Suhrab decides on a detour in order to find himself a beast of burden amongst a roaming pack of horses.

This expedition may be seen as a possible link between the episode of Suhrab and the story of Barzu. In the episode of Suhrab there is a spurious passage in which Suhrab finds himself a horse (*asp guzidan-i Suhrab/sifat-i*

19 Hans Gottfried Ludwig Kosegarten, "Bruchstücke aus dem persischen Heldengedichte Barsunamēh", 309–25.

20 BNF, Supplément Persan 499 and 499a.

21 Francis Richard, "Une copie du Barzû-nâme à la Bibliothèque Suleymaniye", 241.

22 *Haft lashkar*, 244.

asp-i Suhrab). This passage has been relegated to the footnotes in the edition of Khaleghi-Motlagh,²³ though in a large number of *Shahnama* manuscripts, this passage is included in beginning of the episode of Suhrab. The moment when Suhrab goes out to find himself a horse, in itself a reprise of the story of his father Rustam finding Rakhsh, seems to provide a point of connection between Barzu and Suhrab. It is precisely at that point that Suhrab would have an opportunity to meet the mother of his son.

In the *Barzunama* it is told subsequently that Suhrab ends up in a place called Shingan.²⁴ Suhrab comes across a fortress on a mountain and asks the shepherd there to let the horses parade in front of him, one by one. At that moment a beauty passes by. Suhrab orders one of his heroes to fetch the girl, and when she is brought to him he asks for her name and occupations. She tells him her name is Shahru and that her father hunts lions. Suhrab convinces her to become his bride, although her father has just gone away to hunt and cannot give his consent. To seal the match, Suhrab gives Shahru a ring. This passage in the *Barzunama* is strongly reminiscent of a similar passage in the episode of Rustam and Suhrab, in which Rustam presented Tahmina with tokens that proved to be so important to identify Suhrab as his true son, at the end of the episode, when he was mortally wounded by Rustam.

Tahmina had not kept Suhrab's true lineage secret: as soon as Suhrab asked for his father, she had shown him a letter of Rustam containing three rubies and three golden seals. Shahru, the mother of Barzu, acts in a very different manner and keeps the ring she received from Suhrab, the proof of Barzu's descent, secret until she has no choice but to reveal whose son Barzu is. In the *Barzunama*, this act of concealing is commented upon by the composer of the work as being an act against fate. After all, the fate of Barzu was sealed already: the ring bears testimony to his identity and there is no way Barzu can escape the confrontation with Rustam. At the same time, he is also saved by this very ring, and by the intervention of his mother, who is just in time to show the ring to Rustam.²⁵

23 Abu'l-Qasem Ferdowsi, *The Shah Nameh: The Book of Kings*, ed. by Djalal Khaleghi-Motlagh, vol. 2, under "Dastan-i Rustam-u Suhrab", 127.

24 Different variants of this name can be found in the manuscripts: Sangān, Saknān and even Samangan. The village named Shingan in the north-west of the province of Badakhshan in present day Afghanistan has in all likelihood no direct relation with the Shingan of the *Barzunama*.

25 On the role of the ring in the story of Barzu, see Van den Berg, "The ring as a token in the Barzū-nāma: on the importance of lineage and origin".

This intervention is the key scene of the *Barzunama*, both in this version and in the version that does not start with the birth of Barzu, but with the meeting of Barzu and the king of Turan, Afrasiyab, when the former has grown into a strong lad. This latter version is in fact much more common in the manuscript tradition, and this is the version that is interpolated as a rule after the episode of Bizhan and Manizha.

This variant story starts with Afrasiyab wandering around after having been defeated by Rustam, in the episode after Akvan Div. On the road he meets a strong farmer, Barzu. He is greatly impressed by his stature and strength, and asks him about his lineage. But Barzu only knows that his father was a hunter of lions who came to ask his mother for some water. Afrasiyab decides to use Barzu as a new pawn in his battle with Rustam.

The focus in this *Barzunama* version is much more on the war between Iran and Turan and Barzu is brought up as yet another warrior against Afrasiyab. Also in this version, Barzu comes face to face with Rustam in battle and here also his mother reveals just in time that her son is in reality the grandson of Rustam. Rustam and Barzu embrace each other, and Barzu is taken to Sistan, where he becomes a great asset to the Iranian camp. Together they defeat Afrasiyab and Barzu receives the kingdom of Ghur and Herat from King Kay Khusrau in reward.

The scene in which Barzu's true descent is revealed is a repetition of the last combat between Rustam and Suhrab, but with a less tragic outcome. Another difference is the mission of Barzu: he has no other mission than to defeat Rustam as a favour to Afrasiyab. Unlike Suhrab, he is not looking for his father, nor does he seem to be very curious to find out who his father is. In contrast to Suhrab in the episode of Rustam and Suhrab, Barzu knows it is the famous Rustam who he is fighting, even though Rustam again is unaware of the identity of his opponent, until Barzu's mother Shahru miraculously turns up during the fight and reveals Barzu's identity to Rustam, who finds out that Barzu is Suhrab's son, just as he is about to stab him to death.

She said: 'Now listen to me, I will tell you something: heed my words!

Shame on you before the pure God, that you would kill such a young man

On this black earth and that you would make his shirt ruby-red by his blood

He is a descendant from Nariman and your son: he is the grandson of a king and your kin

He is your grandson, you are his grandfather—why is your heart full of deceit against him?

The royal son of Suhrab the hero, with this strength and excellence
 Would you kill him on this lamentable plain, do you not fear God the
 Creator?²⁶

This same intervention scene is central to the story also in the oral tradition, where it is worded in the following manner:

Rustam threw Barzu on the ground and drew his Tahmurasi dagger, he wanted to sever his head from his body, as the mother of Barzu comes galloping and cries: 'Hey Rustam! You have killed Suhrab, are you also going to kill his son?! How can God allow such injustice?' Rustam's hand slackened and he threw away his dagger, and tears start to fall from his eyes; he said: 'Oh woman! Let me see the sign of Suhrab.' Shahru said: 'Uncover the arm of Barzu.' Rustam cuts his sleeve open, and he saw one piece of the rubies he himself had given to the mother of Suhrab. Standing up from the breast of Barzu he said: 'Oh woman! May misfortune hit you! Why did you not say this before?' And he embraced Barzu and cried over the separation with Suhrab; Barzu, grabbing the handle of his dagger, ran to his mother, saying: 'Unworthy woman! Are you not ashamed of God that you have brought me to war with my grandfather? Why haven't you told me?' Shahru said: 'Oh son! It was because of the separation from your father, I wanted you to take revenge on Rustam.' Barzu said: 'And what if I would have been killed?' He wanted to stab her with his dagger, but Rustam did not let him to do this; he said: 'Oh son! Women have limited understanding, praise be to God that it all ended well.' Then Barzu is brought to Sistan to the court of Rustam; the noblemen of Iran come to Zabul to see Barzu and they drink in the hall of Garshasp.²⁷

In the oral tradition of Central Asia, more precisely in the south eastern part of Uzbekistan, in the village of Pasurkhi in the district of Boysun, the story of Barzu is kept alive by storytellers, who regard Barzu as coming from their own area.²⁸ The 'revelation scene' in the story as told by the storyteller Jura Kamol (1921–97) is as follows:

26 *Barzunama*, ed. M. Dabir Siyaqi, 75, verses 1737–1743.

27 *Haft lashkar*, 258.

28 See Ravshan Rahmoni, *Dostoni Barzu dar guftori Jura Kamol*, 17.

At this very moment Rustam gets hold of Barzu, lifts him up and throws him to ground. When he has taken him like that he is on the verge of stabbing him with his dagger. At that moment Turkan Khatun shouts:

'Son-killer!—she says—you killed your son, will you also kill your grandson?'—she says.

He had not yet drawn his dagger, like this [the storyteller shows this by a movement of his hands] he was on the point of drawing it ... He does not let Barzu go.

'What?!'—Rustam says.

Turning around, Turkan Khatun says:

'You have killed your son Suhrab, would you also kill this grandson of yours, this Barzu—she says—would you kill him too?'—she says.

'My grandson?! Barzu?!'—[Rustam is surprised].

'This very man—she says—this is the one! The son of Suhrab he is'—Turkan Khatun says.

'Who are you?!'—Rustam says.

'I am Turkan Khatun. I am from the Turks—she says—I am his mother'.

'How can you prove it?!'—he says, throwing his dagger on the rocks.

'Look!'—she says as she shows him the ring.

He sees that there is in truth the champion's stamp on the ring.

'Well I'm blown!'—[Rustam says]

He rises. Grandfather and grandson embrace each other, crying and wailing.²⁹

The story of Barzu, amongst other *Shahnama* related stories, is told in the village of Pasurkhi during so-called *gashtaks*, evening gatherings.³⁰ The storytellers emphasise repeatedly that the stories are set in the immediate surroundings. One of the reasons to do so is no doubt to captivate the audience. In the perception of the storytellers and those who listen, the notions 'Uzbek' and 'Tajik' also play an important role in the story of Barzu. The mother of Barzu is named Turkan Khatun, 'Lady of the Turks' and she is said to be of an Uzbek tribe. At some point in the story it is said that Barzu is not so handsome as his father, and that he resembles an Uzbek:

²⁹ *Dostoni Barzu dar guftori Jura Kamol*, 35–36.

³⁰ See *ibid.*, 12 and Rahmoni, "The oral variant of the stories of Barzu amongst the Tajiks of Boysun: A fieldwork report", 298.

Afrasiyab sees him coming and trembles all over.

‘Wow!—he says, ‘he is seventy times as big as Rustam’—he says—
‘While he is still a small boy’—he says.

Barzu the farmer was not as beautiful and tall as Suhrab. He was coarse, rough, a squat figure, but huge, like a ghoul, blackish, big as a cow. Coarse and stocky he was. Barzu did not look like a Tajik like Suhrab, he resembled an Uzbek. Then Pirani Gisa says:

‘This boy’—he says—‘looks like his mother, he has no resemblance to his father’—he says—‘He is like his mother’.³¹

The idea that Barzu’s mother was an Uzbek girl, how the story of Barzu came into being, and how it is linked to the region of Boysun in the perception of the storyteller is expressed in the recordings made of another version of the story of Barzu. This is a short version, told by the son of Jura Kamol, Mullo Ravshan, who was born in 1959.

Now we are going to speak of Barzu. Just now we were speaking of Suhrab. The kings made Suhrab meet Rustam, and Suhrab disappeared, that is, he died. Now the story should have ended here. But it did not, the events of the *Shahnama* continued. In order to continue the *Shahnama* it was necessary to find one of the children. How this child should be found, that is of course up to the author. How did Suhrab become a hero? Of course Suhrab, as we have told before, was active here in our area [Boysun], that is in this neighbourhood, in these lands of ours: in the regions of Surkhandarya and Qashqadarya he used to practise archery, sword fighting, throwing the javelin, wrestling—he fought and he struggled, all these things he learnt here. Of course, when Suhrab roamed in this area, fate dictated that he suddenly at that time fell in love with an Uzbek girl. Suhrab saw her, and for a few days he was with that girl, and they made love. Accordingly, they went back to the realm of Afrasiyab. Time passed by, a few years passed by, and then a part of the army of Afrasiyab passed through our realm, that is through Pasurkhi.³²

When the interviewer, Ravshan Rahmoni, asks Mullo Ravshan about the Uzbek element in the story, he is answered as follows:

³¹ *Dostoni Barzu dar guftori Jura Kamol*, 23.

³² This story is included in Rahmoni and van den Berg, *The Story of Barzu as told by two storytellers from Boysun, Uzbekistan*.

RAHMONI: Now they say of Barzu that he passed through Boysun. You said, that you knew from your father ...

MULLO RAVSHAN: Yes, yes.

RAHMONI: He had begun a family with an Uzbek-like woman. But in Boysun everyone is Tajik, isn't it?

MULLO RAVSHAN: No, this is how it was. Boysun ... Now in earlier times, there was down there a place called Khujabulghan. Well now in this Khujabulghan, in earlier times there also lived Uzbeks, and today there are also Uzbeks. And these, precisely, near these Uzbeks, who are in Khujabulghan Suhrab practised.

RAHMONI: Practised?

MULLO RAVSHAN: He practised to be a champion, to be a king, which takes place in that large field of Khujabulghan. Uzbeks live there, and there he became acquainted to an Uzbek girl. That is why there are Uzbeks there ... Otherwise, and so it is, here in our place everyone is Tajik, basically in Boysun seventy-eighty percent is Tajik! But in between the Tajiks there are also groups of Uzbeks of course. In old times, the Uzbeks lived in a scattered manner, they led a tribal life. They were nomads after all. Now this one tribe, one time, was in Khujabulghan to this very Khujabulghan you know. And so Suhrab became acquainted with that woman, there, that is with the mother of Barzu ...

QAYUM (listener, jokes): So it could well be that she [the mother of Barzu] was the great-grandmother of Abdullopalvon. [All laugh. Abdullo is an Uzbek, and nowadays is a famous wrestler of this area.]

MULLO RAVSHAN: [The storyteller answers with a joke] Yes, she might have been the great-grandmother of someone like Abdullo, that is really possible.³³

Conclusion

Lineage and origin are of crucial importance in the story of Barzu in different ways: we have seen that the key scene in all variants of the story, in verse, prose, in the oral tradition or in the written tradition, is the scene in which the identity of Barzu is revealed to Rustam by his mother, who in many cases is not so favourably looked upon by the author or storyteller. This is despite the fact that she has a very active role in the story. Perhaps that is why she is pictured

33 This interview is included in Rahmoni and van den Berg, *The Story of Barzu as told by two storytellers from Boysun, Uzbekistan*.

as an Uzbek in the story coming from Central Asia. In the *Shahnama*, there is the contrast Iran–Turan; on a very different level, we find a similar contrast expressed in the story on Barzu from Central Asia: Tajik versus Uzbek, an update, one might argue, of past contrasts and a (further) appropriation of a tradition.

The story of Rustam and Suhrab and the *Barzunama* in all its appearances seem to be interlinked by the tokens of identification and by the great emphasis laid on lineage and origin, also in small details. We see that in the stories constantly cursory references are made to the heroes of the past, and to their attributes, such as the dagger of Tahmuras and the hall of Garshasp.

The identity question needs to be solved through objects symbolising identity: the ring or seal stands out amongst these. Stories themselves, in turn, may function as a proof of identity. In any case in Central Asia, in Turkic surroundings, they link the Iranian, i.e. Tajik minority to what is perceived to be the Iranian world.

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The Interplay of Oral and Written Traditions in Persian Epics: The Case of the *Barzunama* in the *Haft Lashkar*

Kumiko Yamamoto

The *Barzunama* is one of the post-*Shahnama* epics, relating the heroic exploits of Barzu, son of Suhrab who is killed by the hand of Rustam. It is unknown when and by whom it was composed, but it seems to have been popular around the 17th century.¹ It is a valuable source for studying the influence of the story of Rustam and Suhrab on the later epics, as well as the relationship between oral and written traditions. As such it deserves more scholarly attention. Only recently has it been edited and systematically studied.² While these efforts undoubtedly shed new light on the *Barzunama*, they focus only on shorter versions of the work, ignoring a massive corpus left by poets and storytellers. The primary sources used in this study are the *Haft lashkar*,³ a prose narrative composed by *naqqals* (professional storytellers in Iran)⁴ and a manuscript copy of the *Barzunama* in the Bibliothèque nationale in Paris. The present paper discusses the *Haft lashkar*, provides an overview of the contents of the *Barzunama*, and compares the *Haft lashkar* and the manuscript, moving on to the question of the reception of the *Shahnama* in the *Barzunama*.

1 The *Barzunama* had long been attributed to Abu'l-'Ala 'Ata' b. Ya'qub al-Katib known as Nakuk, who was a secretary to Ibrahim b. Mas'ud (1059–99). This attribution, however, was refuted by F. de Blois who suggested that it was based on an incorrect reading of a single line in the text. Once the authorship is called into question it is difficult to date the work. See François de Blois, *Persian literature: A bio-bibliographical survey*, 229, 470.

2 *Barzunama*, ed. Muhammad Dabir Siyaqi; *Barzunama*, ed. Akhbar Nahvi. Gabrielle van den Berg has studied the “shorter” *Barzunama* interpolated in *Shahnama* manuscripts; see “The *Barzunama* in the Berlin *Shahnama* manuscripts”, 97–114; “The ring as a token in the *Barzunama*: On the importance of lineage and origin”, 215–30.

3 *Haft lashkar* (*tumar-e naqqalan*). Parenthetical citations of page numbers are all referenced to this text.

4 For *naqqals* and *naqqali*, see Kumiko Yamamoto, “*Naqqālī*: Professional Iranian storytelling”, 240–57; eadem, “*Naqqālī*”.

The *Haft lashkar*

The *Haft lashkar* was completed at the time of Nasir al-Din Shah Qajar in 1292 AH/1875. The critical text edited by Mehran Afshari and Mahdi Madayeni is based on a single manuscript housed in the Kitabkhana-yi Majlis-i Shauravi or Baharistan.⁵ According to the editors the *Haft lashkar* was compiled by a group of *naqqals*, about whom little is known.⁶ It is a prose retelling of what may be called the Greater *Shahnama*. It begins with the reign of Kayumars and ends with that of Bahman. It comprises the *Shahnama* and other later epics: the *Garshasptnama*, the *Samnama*, the *Faramarznama*, the *Banu Gushasptnama*, the *Jahangirnama*, the *Barzunama*, *Dastan-i Haft lashkar* and the *Bahman-nama*. It provides a comprehensive summary of the Iranian epic tradition. For our analysis of the *Barzunama* we have used the sections on the *Barzunama* and *Dastan-i Haft lashkar* where Barzu plays an active role (pp. 246–454).

The *Haft lashkar* is a *tumar* (lit. scroll), of the kind that every *naqqal* is supposed to have. At the end of their training the *naqqals* copy their masters' *tumars*. In the past they often had someone copy them. The *tumars* are like diplomas given to the apprentices who have completed their education. They are first and foremost narrative texts, providing the basis for *naqqali* performances. They are written in a style that serves to facilitate oral performance. One of their most obvious stylistic features is what we call narrative markers which serve to mark the boundaries between minimal units of performance, or, simply put, episodes.⁷ In theory the narrative markers indicate the temporal, logical or emotive connections between episodes, and in practice they give the storytellers free rein to control their story. They are also useful for the audience, signaling a change of topic and enabling it to participate in the performance. Their frequent occurrence therefore serves as a reliable criterion for determining whether a given text is a *tumar*.⁸

Being a *tumar* the *Haft lashkar* is replete with narrative markers, which are given below.⁹

5 *Haft lashkar*, XVII, XXXI.

6 *Ibid.*, XXXIX.

7 For the narrative marker see Kumiko Yamamoto, *The oral background of Persian epics*, 34–39, 85–87, 120–22.

8 Another criterion is the use of temporal markers that indicate a new, often unexpected turn in a time-sensitive sequence. For temporal markers see Yamamoto, *The oral background*, 39–42, 88–92, 122–23.

9 The temporal markers used in the *Haft lashkar* include the following: *chun* (when), *dar in vaqt* (at this moment), *ruz-i digar* (the following day), *ruzana-yi digar* (the following day), *negah* (suddenly), *va* (and), *ta* (until).

Signaling a change of topic

amma (but): 64 examples¹⁰

amma ravi guyad (but the storyteller says): 18 examples¹¹

amma, raviyan-i akhbar-u naqilan-i athar chunin ravayat karda-and ...

(but the tellers of stories and the transmitters of traditions have related thus ...): 9 examples¹²

amma, raviyan-i akhbar chunin ravayat karda-and

(but the tellers of stories have related thus): 1 example¹³

amma ravayat karda-and (but they have related): 1 example¹⁴

amma chunin ravayat karda-and (but they have related thus): 2 examples¹⁵

ravayat karda-and, chun ... (They have related when ...): 1 example¹⁶

Indicating a change of a focal character

inha-ra dar anja buguzar va du kalama az ... gush kun

(Leave them there and listen to a few words about ...): 2 examples¹⁷

amma, Dastani az ... gush kun

(But listen to the story of ...): 2 examples¹⁸

ishan-ra dar raftan buguzar, du kalama'i az ... gush kunid

(Leave them to go away, and listen to a few words about ...): 2 examples¹⁹

amma, chand kalama az ... gush kunid

(But listen to a few words about ...): 1 example²⁰

10 *Haft lashkar*, 253, 254 (*chun*), 258 (*dar dam-i subh*), 260, 264, 265, 267, 269, 269 (*chun*), 272, 274 (*chun*), 276 (*chun*), 277, (278), 278, 282, 285 (*chun*), 290, 298, 303, 311, 338, 341 (*dar sar zadan-i aftab*), 344 (*an ruz*), 345 (*chun*), 346 (*chun*), 347 (*az an janib*), 349 (*chun*), 350, 350 (*chun*), 351 (*az an janib*), 353 (*dar sar zadan-i aftab*), 358 (*az an janib*), 364 (*az an janib*), 365, 366 (*chun*), 369 (*chun*), 381 (*chun*), 383, 387, 388 (*chun*), 391, 394, 400, 407, 408 (*az an janib*), 414, 415, 419, 426, 431, 436, 437, 438 (*chun*), 442, 445 (*az an janib*), 446, 449 (*an shab*), 450, 451, 453 (*chun*).

11 *Ibid.*, 276, 299, 357 (*chun*), 362, 371, 385, 408, 409, 411, 412, 413, 417, 424, 428, 432, 437 (without *amma*), 439, 453.

12 *Ibid.*, 272, 280, 285, 302, 309, 318, 366, 402, 407.

13 *Ibid.*, 405.

14 *Ibid.*, 334.

15 *Ibid.*, 246, 259.

16 *Ibid.*, 329.

17 *Ibid.*, 263, 351.

18 *Ibid.*, 303, 336.

19 *Ibid.*, 394.

20 *Ibid.*, 352.

amma, du kalama az ... gush kunid

(But listen to a few words about ...): 4 examples²¹

az in (an) janib (on this (that) side): 17 examples²²

Summing up

al-qissa (in short): 40 examples²³

al-qissa, du kalama az ... gush bishinavid

(In short, listen to a few words about ...): 2 examples²⁴

Amma is clearly the most often used marker in the *Haft lashkar*. Ninety-six examples are found in some 200 pages, i.e., one on every two pages. It means 'but', though in most cases it simply functions to signal a change of topic or a new turn of events. It may be shorthand for *amma raviyan-i akhbar-u naqilan-i athar chunin ravayat karda-and* (but the tellers of stories and the transmitters of traditions have related thus) and its variants, which are used at the very beginning of a story, or at the start of a larger segment of the story. It signifies the start of something new at a minimal level, allowing the storyteller to interrupt the narrative whenever he wishes to do so. Another frequently used marker is *al-qissa* (in short): 42 examples, roughly one on every four and a half pages. This is often used at the end or in the concluding part of an episode. In combats, which the *tumar* is never short of, heroes fight each other and neither wins nor loses because they are equally matched. Their combats can only be concluded with the intervention of the storyteller who controls the narrative; this is indicated by *al-qissa*.

Storytellers leave their individual traces by the way in which they use the narrative markers and by the particular types of markers they use or they do not use. The narrative markers are their signatures. As has been mentioned, the *Haft lashkar* was composed by some *naqqals* about whom little is known. However, by looking at the way the narrative markers are used in the *tumar*, we can see that more than one storyteller has worked on it. The *Barzunama* can be roughly divided into 9 parts.²⁵ The storyteller who wrote Part 6, for example,

21 Ibid., 266, 358, 359, 444.

22 Ibid., 260, 271, 288, 331, 342, 346, 381, 382, 391, 398, 403, 428, 435, 440, 452.

23 Ibid., 261 (*az an janib*), 271 (*az an janib*), 279 (*chun*), 282, 283, 287, 288, 294, 301, 308 (*amma*), 313, 321, 322, 324, 332, 333, 335 (*az an janib*), 336 (*az an janib*), 342 (*chun*), 352 (*az an janib*), 355, 365, 370, 379, 382, 393, 396, 404, 409, 414, 416, 418, 420, 423, 430 (*chun*), 439, 440, 441, 445, 452.

24 Ibid., 391, 452 (*gush kunid*).

25 See below.

uses *amma* almost always with other markers such as *az in janib* ('on this side') or *chun* ('when'), resulting in *amma, az in janib* (but on this side)²⁶ or *amma, chun* (but when).²⁷ He even uses *al-qissa* in place of *amma*: *al-qissa az in janib* (in short on this side), which is very unusual.²⁸ The storyteller who composed Part 7, on the other hand, tends to use *amma, ravi guyad* (but the storyteller says) rather than simply *amma*,²⁹ whilst *amma, ravi guyad* never occurs in Part 1, whose author apparently prefers *amma, chunin ravayat karda-and* (but they have related thus).³⁰ While these are very simple examples, they seem to suggest that different storytellers manipulated the story materials at their disposal in different way.

Overview of the *Barzunama*

Equipped with narrative markers how do the storytellers construct (or de-construct) the tale of Barzu? Before answering the question it is necessary to provide an overview of the *Barzunama* as a basis for further analysis.³¹ As mentioned above, the *Barzunama* is divided into 9 parts. The titles given after the part number are all provisional, except that of the *Susan-nama*, which is often included in some later manuscript copies and edited texts of the *Shahnama*.³²

Part 1: The story of Rustam and Barzu (pp. 246–59)

Part 2: The *Susan-nama* (pp. 259–69)

Part 3: The story of Barzu and Fahr-i Simin-'Izar 1 (pp. 269–79)

Part 4: The story of Barzu and Fahr-i Simin-'Izar 2 (pp. 280–308)

Part 5: The birth of Timur, son of Barzu³³ (pp. 318–25)

Part 6: Timur's fighting in Iran (pp. 329–82)

Part 7: Jahanbakhsh's *haft khan* (seven trials, pp. 383–426)

Part 8: Rustam's fighting with Kuhkish (Faramarz) and Timur (pp. 426–35)

Part 9: Hizhabr-bala (pp. 435–54)

26 *Haft lashkar*, 347, 351, 358, 364.

27 *Ibid.*, 345, 346, 349, 350, 366, 369, 381.

28 *Ibid.*, 335, 336, 352.

29 *Ibid.*, 385, 408, 409, 411, 412, 413, 417, 424.

30 *Ibid.*, 246, 259.

31 The *Ihya al-Muluk's* version of the story covers only Parts 1 and 2 of the *tumar*. See Van den Berg, "The *Barzunama* in the Berlin *Shahnama* Manuscripts", 99–101.

32 The *Susan-nama* is found together with the adventures of Barzu in the supplement to the *Shahnama* edited by Turner Macan, *The Shah Nameh*, IV, 2160–2296, and by Muhammad Dabir Siyaqi, *Shahnama-yi Hakim Abu'l-Qasim Firdausi*, VI, 77–246, esp. 163–246.

33 He is also called Tamur.

In Part 1 Barzu is recognised by Rustam as the son of Suhrab. At the end of the tale of Bizhan and Manizha, Afrasiyab finds Barzu working with a spade. He immediately sees that Barzu is a matchless warrior. He sends Barzu with Piran to Iran. Rustam confronts Barzu in single combat, and is wounded in the shoulder. He asks for a truce. Faramarz comes to aid him and fights with Barzu, pretending to be Rustam. During the combat Barzu's horse gets caught in a hole and he is taken captive in Sistan, but is rescued by his mother, Shahru. He confronts Rustam again. The two run a dead heat, fighting each other for three days and nights. Being desperate, Rustam prays to God for help. He is immediately empowered and defeats Barzu with ease. When he is about to behead Barzu, Shahru intervenes and tells him that Barzu is Suhrab's son. He finds the ruby which he has given Suhrab on Barzu's body. He welcomes Barzu as a member of his family (pp. 244–59).

In Part 2, hearing of Barzu's betrayal Afrasiyab sends the sorceress Susan and the warrior Pilsam to Sistan. Susan captures one hero after the other until, finally, Rustam comes to rescue them. While he is fighting Pilsam, Barzu single-handedly fights with Afrasiyab's men. Faramarz arrives with his host, as does Kay Khusrav. A mass battle ensues. Barzu defeats Pilsam, whom Rustam cannot really overcome, and he meets Afrasiyab in single combat. When Afrasiyab is hurt the Turanians run into the field. Barzu beats them all by himself. He is appointed as Rustam's heir (pp. 259–69).

Part 3 is about the romance between Barzu and Fahr-i Simin 'Izar. The appointment of Barzu as Rustam's heir creates a conflict with Faramarz who is the eldest son of Rustam. The two fight each other. Being Rustam's descendants however, they are equally matched and the fight ends in a draw. Rustam tells Barzu to bring Fuladvand Div's head from Chin. Barzu is injured from the fight with the *div* and is taken care of by 'Aqila, Garsivaz's son. He meets and falls in love with 'Aqila's sister, Fahr-i Simin 'Izar. The two exchange rings as a token of engagement. But Barzu is taken captive by the sorceress Marjan who takes sides with the *div*. When he is about to be hanged by Afrasiyab, the Qatran-i Zangi comes to Afrasiyab's aid. Having fallen in love with Fahr-i Simin 'Izar, Qatran demands her hands in exchange for his military service to Afrasiyab. Barzu fights with Qatran Shah, Fuladvand and Marjan. During the battle, Fahr is carried away by Qatran to the Maghrib. Barzu follows her. His enemies also go to the Maghrib where a battle begins. Barzu is briefly reunited with Fahr, but he is taken captive by Fuladvand and Qatran Shah. Hearing of the news Rustam also sets off to the Maghrib (pp. 269–79).

Part 4 is the sequel to the story of Barzu and Fahr-i Simin 'Izar. On his way to rescue Barzu Rustam fights with Gush b. Gush, a descendant of Zahhak. Defeated by Rustam, Gush b. Gush runs away to Iran. Rustam meets a one-armed foot soldier who rescues Barzu. In recognition of the foot soldier's

contribution Rustam gives him his own name. Thus he is now called Rustam-i Yakdast. He offers his services to Rustam and Barzu. Gush b. Gush attacks the Iranians in the absence of Rustam. Bizhan and other heroes are taken captive and Gush b. Gush challenges Kay Khusrau to meet him in single combat. When this fight is about to begin, Rustam and others return. Gush b. Gush is defeated by Rustam-i Yakdast. While the Iranians celebrate their victory, Barzu asks Rustam's permission to search for Fahr-i Simin 'Izar, who is now in Turan. Disguised as a merchant Barzu goes to recover her. Through the help of his mother he arranges to meet her. But it is Rustam-i Yakdast who goes to pick her up. He falls in love with her. Reunited again, Barzu and Fahr go back to Iran. Afrasiyab dispatches Garsivaz, Qatran Shah and Fuladvand to get Fahr back. A battle begins. Barzu prevails over the Turanian forces. During the battle Rustam-i Yakdast abducts Fahr and goes to Siyahrang Div's castle in Mazandaran. Yet another battle begins. Iranian heroes are captured one after the other. Even Barzu is taken captive. Rustam sends Faramarz, Sam (son of Faramarz), Zavara and Shujjar. But the Zabuli heroes are also taken prisoner. Finally Rustam arrives to defeat Siyahrang Div. He fights with Rustam-i Yakdast, and rescues Barzu, Faramarz and Sam. While he is busy fighting in Mazandaran, Afrasiyab invades Iran. Nearly defeated Khusrau writes to Rustam for help. On reading the letter Rustam dispatches Seven Armies (*haft lashkar*), led by Bizhan, Ruhham, Gustaham, Giv, Faramarz, Barzu and Zavara, respectively. Fahr is sent to Zabulistan (pp. 280–308).

Part 5 is about Barzu's dragon hunt and marriage, from which he has a son called Timur. Rustam appoints Barzu as his heir again. His decision divides the Iranians into two camps. One group supports Barzu and the other Faramarz. Again neither defeats the other, and Khusrau suggests to the two that whoever captures a wild ass for him will be Rustam's heir. Barzu wanders into a desert where he meets a *div* called Surkhab. He is taken by the *div* to Khwarazm where he falls in love with the princess Huri-liqa. The king, however, will only give her hand to the one who slaughters a dragon. Barzu slays the dragon, and marries the princess. After two months Rustam appears in his dream, urging him to return to Iran. He rides into a meadow which belongs to Afrasiyab. He is attacked by the Turanians. Just when he is about to be defeated, Faramarz arrives with his host. Both fight against Afrasiyab. Reconciled, they return to Zabulistan.

Huri-liqa gives birth to Timur who grows as fast as his ancestors. One day he asks his mother who his father is. He knows about Barzu and decides to go to Iran to make Barzu King of Iran and Rustam King of Turan. When he is about to depart with 12,000 men he receives a message from the Faghfur of Chin. The Faghfur wants Timur as his son in law. Timur sets off to Chin and falls in love

with Huma, the daughter of the Faghfur. The Faghur, however, tells Timur to defeat Jamshid Shah of the East before Timur can marry his daughter. This enrages Afrasiyab who sends a host to defeat the Faghfur. During the battle Timur captures all the enemy's warriors, and meets Afrasiyab in single combat. Just when he prevails over the Turanian king, Garsivaz comes to rescue him. Afrasiyab and the Faghur join forces to attack Iran. Timur decides to join them to try his hand at fighting Rustam, Barzu and other heroes. He will then make peace with them and jointly they will attack Turan (pp. 308–25).

Part 6 begins with Timur taking Iranian heroes prisoner. Rustam tells Barzu and Faramarz that whoever defeats Timur will be his heir. Rustam-i Yakdast steals Rakhsh, which Barzu fails to retrieve. Faramarz humiliates Barzu in public. Rustam whips Faramarz who, wounded and hurt, leaves for India. While Timur and Yakdast are fighting against Sam, Faramarz returns covering his face with a *niqab* (veil) and using the pseudonym of Kuhkish. Faramarz-Kuhkish fights against both Iranians and Turanians, pretending to be a descendant of Zahhak. Thus, a series of single combats is fought, not only between Timur and Iranian/Zabuli heroes but also between these and Kuhkish. While they are fighting in the Dasht-i Ray, Yakdast attacks Sistan and takes Banu Gushasp and others prisoner. Afrasiyab sends the prisoners to Sanjan. Barzu rescues them, fighting against Afrasiyab's army. On his way back to Ray, he breaks a magic spell to rescue a prince. He is welcomed by Rustam and Khusrau when he returns (pp. 325–83).

Part 7 centres on Jahanbakhsh's *haft khan*. Barzu learns from Timur that Rakhsh is bound by the magic spell of Haft Khan. Pildandan, son of Gush b. Gush, attacks Sistan. Banu Gushasp and Zal defend their castle from Pildandan who, defeated, secretly returns to Ray. Zal calls down the Simurgh to inquire about the whereabouts of Rakhsh and Faramarz. The Simurgh tells him that when Rakhsh is released by Jahanbakhsh, Faramarz will return. Kuhkish defeats Pildandan. His secret is revealed to his sisters with whom he has unknowingly fought. Jahanbakhsh is taken captive in the Maghrib. He is rescued by Sam, who in turn disappears into the sky and is rescued by Kuhkish. Jahanbakhsh goes to Haft Khan with Gustaham who knows how to reach it. He defeats lions and wolves, travels through the burning desert, kills a *div*, and fights against the Zangis from the first *khan* through to the fifth. In the sixth *khan* he obtains a tablet that reveals the secret of the magic spell. In the seventh *khan* he reaches a dome without a door and finds Siyamak's will as well as the steed Rakhsh. He returns, going through each *khan* again. When he reaches the first *khan* he is attacked by Rustam-i Yakdast. Being wounded he prays to God. Then Kuhkish arrives with his men. They return to Ray (pp. 383–426).

In Part 8 Rakhsh is restored to Rustam after four years and Rustam comes to the fore. He first fights with Kuhkish. During a bout of wrestling he unveils Kuhkish, only to realise that he has been fighting with his own son. He then confronts Timur in single combat. When he is about to cut him on the chest two veiled women come running to the field to tell him that Timur is his great grandson. Rustam thanks God for not killing his own kin (pp. 426–35).

In Part 9 the Khaqan of Chin arrives with his champion Hizhabr-bala to help Afrasiyab. Hizhabr-bala is so strong that he takes the Iranian heroes captive and wounds Barzu, Sam and Jahanbakhsh. Siyahpush, who is clad in black, arrives to fight Hizhabr-bala. He is also wounded. Qahrman Shah then also joins the battle. Yakdast becomes jealous of Hizhabr-bala, who is now Afrasiyab's favourite. He fights with Hizhabr-bala, and Qahrman Shah who is also called Palangina-jushan. He runs away from Qahrman Shah's mace. Zal dreams an auspicious dream.

Rustam is in the Maghrib to rescue Pas-i Parhizkar. At the foot of a mountain he finds a milestone warning him of a dragon. He ignores the warning and fights the dragon, but he cannot slay it. It turns out that the dragon can only be defeated by the Prophet 'Ali. Rustam vows to serve the Prophet. He rescues Pas-i Parhizkar, destroys idol temples and heads towards Ray.

Reinforced by the sorceress Marjan, the Turanians have the upper hand on the Iranians. The Zabuli heroes are all wounded and everyone feels hopeless. Just then Rustam comes back to vanquish Hizhabr-bala. Rustam-i Yakdast flees to India. Rustam fights with Siyahpush and Qahrman Shah, who are in fact Tur (son of Jahangir) and Jahangir (son of Rustam) respectively. He could not recognise his own son whom he had not seen for a long time (pp. 435–54).

Such is the story of the *Barzunama*. It shows, albeit in oversimplified form, how the storytellers develop the plot. Their ultimate goal is to prolong the story as much as possible. To achieve this goal they rely on certain recurring motifs. One such motif is undoubtedly the romance between Barzu and Fahr-i Simin 'Izar in Parts 3 and 4. It is reminiscent of popular romances such as *Samak-i 'ayyar* and *Amir Arsalan* (a 19th-century prose romance composed by Nasir al-Din Shah's *naqqal*).³⁴ Like many heroes of romances and epics, Barzu falls in love with Fahr-i Simin 'Izar at first sight, and he marries her. His happiness, however, does not last long. He is soon separated from his beloved by three opponents. The first of these is Afrasiyab, who is against his marriage and who therefore constantly attempts to take away Fahr-i Simin 'Izar from him. The second opponent is Qatran Shah, who also falls in love with her. Being a champion of the Zangis he takes her to the Maghrib. The third opponent is

34 *Samak-i 'ayyar*, edited by Parviz Natel Khanlari; *Amir Arsalan*, edited by Muhammad Ja'far Mahjub.

Rustam-i Yakdast, who mysteriously appears in front of Barzu and Rustam. He sides with them at first, but later goes over to the enemy. He too falls in love with her and abducts her to Mazandaran. Every time Barzu is reunited with his beloved one of these opponents steals her from him. He invariably follows her and fights many wars to retrieve her. This repetitive pattern of chase and war is the very strategy the storytellers use in extensively constructing this part of the narrative. Prolific as it is, as far as the narrative is concerned, it is pointless from the epic point of view, because Barzu's marriage with Fahr-i Simin 'Izar does not produce a son. Marriage without an heir is unthinkable in the *Shahnama*. In the tale of Barzu, then, romance is pure padding. It is an artificial device to lengthen the narrative.

The wars in which Barzu engages himself in his attempt to rescue Fahr-i Simin 'Izar are likewise recurring motifs. They are fought in a fairly fixed manner. A single combat always precedes a mass battle. In the single combat the heroes first fight with various weapons such as spears, maces, swords, arrows, and lassoes. They change weapons until one of them is defeated. If the combat does not end even when they have tried all the weapons, they resort to wrestling, which may go on for three days and nights, and still may not lead to a decision. Barzu usually overwhelms the enemy in wrestling, but the enemy is too cunning to be simply defeated. When he foresees a defeat he secretly runs away at night; or he gains support from his colleagues to trap Barzu. In the Maghrib, Barzu nearly defeats Fuladvand in single combat. The moment he is about to wound Fuladvand, Qatran Shah attacks him from the rear. He throws a lasso over Barzu's neck. Seeing this Fuladvand also throws a lasso around Barzu's neck. The two pull the lassos with all their might. Barzu is helpless. He is captured and imprisoned (p. 279). Whether the enemy escapes or prevails over the hero, the story continues. For the escaped enemy will come back with renewed energy and when captured, Barzu must be rescued by Rustam or some other heroes. The storytellers do not simply let the heroes kill their enemies, which will bring about a resolution of conflicts. Rather, they let the enemies survive so that the story inevitably carries on.

Given that Barzu and other Zabuli heroes are all as powerful as Rustam, their fighting is fairly predictable. They can always defeat the enemy single-handed. This does not create a positive interest in the minds of the audience. The success of performance therefore lies in the creation of sly and guileful enemy who can importune the heroes with repeated attacks. Rustam-i Yakdast is no doubt such an enemy. He first serves Rustam faithfully, and hence is named Rustam-i Yakdast. It is he who rescues Barzu in the Maghrib and overcomes Gush b. Gush for the Iranians. Everyone thinks he belongs to the Iranians and yet he betrays Barzu when he falls in love with Fahr. From then on he indirectly

fight for the Turanians with Siyahrang Div.³⁵ He even confronts Rustam, but he is not totally defeated. On the occasion of the advance of the Seven Armies he once again joins the Iranians. Later, however, he helps Timur retrieve his horse and steals Rustam's horse. Again he is among the Turanians, fighting with Kuhkish, Jahanbakhsh and others. He makes a night attack on Khusrau's army. When he is defeated he raids Sistan in the absence of Rustam. Knowing that he cannot go through the *haft khan* he waits for Jahanbakhsh to come back and attacks him. Defeated, he returns to Afrasiyab. Still, being jealous of Hizhabr-bala who has become Afrasiyab's favourite, he fights with the latter. Rustam-i Yakdast is independent, sometimes fighting for the Iranians sometimes for the Turanians. He is never completely defeated though often wounded in battle. He never gives up and always comes back with new strategies. He is unreliable and unpredictable, which makes the story more complicated and interesting.

Comparison between the *tumar* and Manuscript Supplément persan 499

We have seen some of the devices the storytellers use to extend their narrative. This characteristic can be also observed in the manuscript versions of the *Barzunama*. There are several manuscripts of the *Barzunama*, most of which have been described and among which we have used the Ms. Supplément persan 499 of the Bibliothèque nationale in Paris because of its length and size (38,000 distiches).³⁶ The manuscript was copied for Anquetil-Duperron in 1760 from an older manuscript written in Isfahan in 1663. Our understanding of the manuscript derives from the study of the page headings which provide the gist of an episode in a single line.

A quick comparison between the *tumar* and the manuscript shows that the two more or less agree, but there are some differences, of which three seem most significant. The first difference occurs at the beginning. The manuscript version begins with the combat between Rustam and Suhrab, which ends with the latter's death (ff. 2v–9). The story then returns to the episode of Suhrab's encounter with Shahru, the princess of Shingan. On his way to Iran Suhrab

35 For a more extensive account of Yakdast's fight with Siyahrang Div in the *Haft lashkar*, see Gabrielle van den Berg, "The Book of the Black Demon,' or *Shabrang-nāma*", 197–200.

36 For the manuscripts of the *Barzunama*, see Angelo Piemontese, "I manoscritti persiani del Fondo Sbath nella Biblioteca Vaticana e un nuovo 'Barzūnama'", 447–64; Francis Richard, "Une copie du *Barzū-nāme* à la Bibliothèque Süleymaniye", 241–48; de Blois, 470–71; Gabrielle van den Berg, "Borzu-nāma (article 2)".

stops at the fortress of Shingan and encounters Shahru. The moment he sees her he falls in love with her and marries her. Their marriage is consummated and Barzu is born (ff. 9–10). In the *tumar* the episode takes place in the story of Rustam and Suhrab. As in the manuscript, Suhrab visits a village on his way to Iran. When he sees a girl filling a jar with water he is immediately attracted by her. He inquires after her and learns that she is the daughter of the head of the village. He offers her father a gift of gold and marries her. That night Barzu is conceived (pp. 185–86).³⁷ The *tumar* version only cursorily mentions Suhrab's marriage with the village girl, who is left unnamed. Nor does it name the village where Suhrab meets the girl. Nevertheless we know that the girl is Shahru and the village is Shingan as her name is given later on (pp. 253–54) and Barzu is found by Afrasiyab in Shingan (p. 244).

The second difference is found between Parts 2 and 3. The manuscript relates two additional episodes after Part 2: Barzu's battle with Lahut Shah (ff. 59v–72v) and his slaying of a dragon in Yemen (ff. 73–77). In the former episode Barzu is dispatched by Kay Khusrau to the East, to fight a battle with Lahut Shah. Both the daughter of Lahut Shah and a sorceress fall in love with Barzu and try to attract him through magic, but Barzu ignores them. He defeats Lahut Shah in combat and the latter escapes. Then he confronts Siyah Div in single combat from which the *div* flees. He conquers the Lahut Shah's castle and returns to Iran. The latter episode anticipates Part 5, in which the dragon-hunting theme is interwoven with that of marriage. Barzu hears of a dragon from King Bahram of Yemen. His daughter falls in love with Barzu at first sight. Barzu slays the dragon successfully and is given the hand of the princess.

The third difference concerns Parts 7 and 9. The manuscript version tells of the episode of Hizhabr-bala (ff. 168–178, Part 9) before Jahanbakhsh's *haft khan* (ff. 190–219, Part 7). As in Part 9 of the *tumar*, Hizhabr-bala takes every opponent prisoner or injures him. Unlike in Part 9, however, Rustam does not appear to defeat Hizhabr-bala as his horse Rakhsh is still missing. It is Jahanbakhsh who vanquishes Hizhabr-bala, which nicely connects the narrative with the next episode of his *haft khan*.

There are some discrepancies between the *tumar* and the manuscript. In the manuscript we find some additional episodes. Other episodes are told in different places. Some characters appear under a different name, while others

37 In another *naqqal*'s account Suhrab has been wounded in a battle. He reaches Shingan and is taken care of by Shuhra, princess of Shingan. The two love each other immediately, but their union is opposed by the king of Shingan. Both are arrested, and Suhrab faces execution, although he is rescued at the last minute. This takes place before Suhrab goes to Iran. 'Abbas Zariri, *Dastan-i Rustam va Suhrab*, 114–23.

turn up in only one text or the other.³⁸ Yet the two agree on essential points. From the point of view of *naqqali* this does not come as a surprise as it is common for the storytellers to consult the epics. They generally follow pre-existing stories although they may add extra episodes to flesh out their narrative. It is highly likely, therefore, that the authors of the *tumar* used a versified version of the *Barzunama*, which may not be the particular manuscript we have consulted but is close to it.

As far as the manuscript is concerned, on the other hand, the near agreement with the *tumar* raises a question. The manuscript presents many characteristics of *naqqali* performance. Its sheer length suggests that it is influenced by the *naqqali* tradition, which attempts to extend the session and postpone the ending. It shows, for example, that the episode of Barzu's dragon hunt is repeated twice—an obvious case of extension through repetition. Furthermore, it adds the episode of Lahut Shah, which is unconnected with the rest of the text. For that matter, it contains the lengthy episode of Barzu's romance with Fahr-i Simin 'Izar with the accompanying war episodes, which occur repeatedly. Moreover, like the *tumar* it repeats the episodes of *haft khan* twice; once the protagonist is Barzu who breaks a magic spell, and the second time it is Jahanbakhsh who brings back Rakhsh and rescues his father. The question is why these features, which are best explained by the exigencies of oral performance, appear in the text in verse.

A possible answer would be that the text was directly or indirectly influenced by oral performance. The poet(s) or scribe(s) may have heard the story told by the storyteller and have remembered the oral performance when he or they composed the text. The *Barzunama* gradually evolved over the centuries. We do not know when it was first composed and are not certain whether its nucleus goes back to the late 11th century or the early 12th century as Z. Safa has conjectured.³⁹ Francis Richard, however, assumes that there was an archetype for the *Barzunama* which was successively altered and enriched by the *Shahnama-khwans* with new episodes in the course of the centuries.⁴⁰ Given that most of the existing manuscripts of the text date from the 17th century, including the one from which Supplément persan 499 was copied, it is possible to surmise that the *Barzunama* was in vogue then, at a time that coincides

38 In Part 5 of the *Haft lashkar* Barzu is taken by a *div* to Khwarazm, where he falls in love with Huri-Liqa. In the manuscript he is taken to Khata and meets Huma (ff. 127–28), but the events that happen in the part are similar. Huma(i) is the name of Timur's beloved in the *Haft lashkar*.

39 Zabih-Allah Safa, *Hamasa-sara'i dar Iran*, 308–9.

40 Richard, 248.

with the apogee of oral tradition in Iran, which comprised *Shahnama-khwani* and *naqqali* among several other genres. It is tempting to suppose, if only by way of a heuristic bridge, that the telling of the *Barzunama* was contemporary with the production of manuscripts. There was an opportunity for cross-fertilization between the two. The written tradition was affected by oral tradition, which in turn was nourished by the written tradition. The two developed side by side.

Reception of the *Shahnama* in the *Barzunama*

While the influence of oral tradition on written tradition remains largely speculative, the influence of written tradition on oral tradition is undisputed in *naqqali*, which reworks themes recounted in the *Shahnama*. A prominent *naqqal*, 'Abbas Zariri, expands the story of Rustam and Suhrab with other episodes borrowed from the *Shahnama*. Tahmina, who heroically fights with her enemies, is reminiscent of Gurdafarid.⁴¹ Her raising Suhrab with the help of a lioness echoes the tale of Faranak, who raises Faridun with the cow Birmaya.⁴² The storytellers recreate what was told by Firdausi. They have modelled their *Barzunama* on the story of Rustam and Suhrab and the *haft khans* of Rustam and Isfandiyar.

As Marijan Molé wrote nearly 60 years ago, the later epics are essentially based on the story of Rustam and Suhrab.⁴³ As far as the *Barzunama* is concerned, he is definitely correct. It contains four different versions of the story: Barzu, son of Suhrab meets Rustam in single combat (pp. 254–59), and so do Timur, son of Barzu (pp. 434–35), Faramarz (Kuhkish), son of Rustam (pp. 428–33), and Jahangir, another son of Rustam (pp. 453–54). Unlike the story of Rustam and Suhrab, however, they are not killed by Rustam. When Rustam is about to strike Barzu with a dagger Barzu's mother shouts at him: "O Rustam, you killed Suhrab and are you going to kill his son too?" (p. 258). Likewise Timur's mother intervenes to save her own son: "O courageous Rustam, Timur is Barzu's son. Don't kill him lest you will be sorry" (p. 435). Jahangir is saved by his vizier, which is merely a variant of the intervention-by-mother theme (p. 454). The case of Faramarz is, however, different. Faramarz is disguised as Kuhkish wearing a *niqab*. When he wrestles with Rustam his *niqab* is torn apart, and Rustam recognises his son's familiar face (p. 433). These episodes all

41 Zariri, 46–47.

42 Ibid., 50–52.

43 Marijan Molé, "L'épopée iranienne après Firdōsi", 379–80.

have a happy ending which naturally shifts the focus of the narrative from the tragic death of a son to the extremely prolonged process of fighting between Rustam and his kinsmen and between his kinsmen. Before finally bearing arms against Rustam these Zabuli heroes fight one another, which generally ends in a stalemate. In the *Barzunama* the scene of recognition is less important than confusion among the family caused by the presence of a seemingly unknown person.

More importantly, in Barzu's case the happy ending brings the question of succession to the surface. Shortly after Rustam accepts Barzu as one of the family, he declares that Barzu is to succeed himself because he is the son of Suhrab whom he has killed inadvertently and whose death still torments him (p. 269). As noted above, his decision upsets Faramarz, his eldest son. Faramarz challenges Barzu to a wrestling match, saying that if he beats Barzu the succession remains with him, but if he is beaten he will forgo it. However, neither beats the other. Rustam tells Barzu to conquer Fuladvand Div in the East in place of himself (pp. 269–70). This episode is repeated again. Just before a fight with Rustam-i Yakdast Rustam tells everyone present that he will bequeath his insignia to Barzu if he does not survive the combat. Faramarz remonstrates about Rustam's decision, saying that Barzu is only his grandson. Hearing this Barzu gets angry. The two proceed to fight, dividing the Iranians into two camps; one group supports the cause of Faramarz and the other that of Barzu (p. 308). The episode responds in no ambiguous manner to the audience's question as to what would happen if Suhrab were alive. His survival, which his son Barzu embodies, seriously disturbs the line of succession, making light of Faramarz who is the legitimate heir.

The conflict between Faramarz and Barzu recurs under various guises throughout the narrative,⁴⁴ culminating in Faramarz's double identity. When Rakhsh is stolen by Rustam-i Yakdast, Rustam becomes depressed. Faramarz accuses Barzu of failing to capture the thief. Barzu in turn blames Faramarz for failing to bring back Rakhsh from the Turanian camp. This infuriates Rustam so much that he gives Faramarz a hundred lashes in the presence of Kay Khusrau and the Persian chieftains. Humiliated, Faramarz goes back to India (pp. 336–38), but after a while he comes back veiled and calls himself Kuhkish (p. 342). His false identity confuses everyone as he fights both the Turanians and the Iranians. He is at once enemy and friend to Rustam and his family. By assuming a false identity, in a way he plays the role of Suhrab, only the order is reversed. Suhrab confronts Rustam as his enemy-son and has to be killed to

44 *Haft lashkar*, 269, 303–308, 309, 329–38, 352–56.

be recognized as his son. Faramarz is legally and symbolically killed by Rustam and confronts Rustam as enemy-son.

Faramarz is not the only one who assumes a false identity. All Rustam's children who are born of an Iranian mother disguise their identity in order to stand up to Rustam. Jahangir, Rustam's second son, also wears a *niqab* and gives false names, such as Qahrman Shah of the Maghrib or Palangina-jushan in order to fight with Rustam. His son Tur is likewise veiled and calls himself Siyapush. He also confronts Rustam, who takes him prisoner (p. 453). Rustam's daughters, Banu Gushasp and Azar Banu, also put on veils whenever they go to war. While the veiled women may not constitute a novelty in the Persian context, in this particular case the veiling serves as the means by which Banu Gushasp and Azar Banu transform themselves into warriors, unknown and confusing in their male personae. It erases, rather than accentuates, gender differences, which might provide some thoughts for feminist theorists.

Narrating the unveiling of Rustam's offspring takes some time, and the case of Faramarz is by far the most elaborate and complicated. The Simurgh tells Zal that Jahanbakhsh, Faramarz's son, has to go through *haft khan* in order to locate Rakhsh and Faramarz (pp. 393–94). Jahanbakhsh's *haft khan* is a key episode in the latter part of the story. It brings Rakhsh and hence Rustam back to the centre stage, which takes the narrative into a series of combats between Rustam and Kuhkish, between Rustam and Timur, and between Rustam and Jahangir, resulting in the successive unveiling of Rustam's descendants.

The fact that Jahanbakhsh, who is only a secondary character, plays such a decisive role in the story seems rather striking and unconventional. Being Faramarz's son, of course, he has every reason to find his own father, and in fact his sense of filial duty has already become manifested when he challenges Barzu, seeking revenge for the "virtual murder" of Faramarz (pp. 344–47; 387–88). But again, the rescue of the father by the son is out of line with the epic tradition, which repeats filicidal themes over and over again: Suhrab, Siyavush, Isfandiyar, just to name a few.⁴⁵ Jahanbakhsh's *haft khan* is a singular event in which the father neither tests nor torments the son, but the son seeks out the father. It is a singular event because it reverses the story of Rustam and Suhrab: instead of the father killing the son, the son restores the father to life.

Such a radical reversal of the story of Rustam and Suhrab is an answer to the questions raised by this story in particular and the *Shahnama* in general: why is Suhrab killed by his father Rustam despite his efforts to introduce himself to him? Why must the son be tortured by the father in the *Shahnama*? Why is the father so dominant in the *Shahnama*? Suhrab's death and many sons' deaths in

45 As discussed at length by Dick Davis, *Epic and sedition*, 97–166.

the *Shahnama*, which are irrevocable no matter how much one may grieve for their losses, definitely call for explanations and interpretations. The audience cannot help but to ask questions in the face of the irrevocability of death. Such questions form the basis of the structure of the later works, which attempt to answer them by incorporating episodes that run counter to those in the previous work. In this hermeneutic series of questions and answers the storytellers act as intermediaries by listening to the audience's questions and answering them in their performance; they are willing to comply with the audience's requests to ensure their return to the next session.⁴⁶ It is they who added the stories of the survival of the sons, grandson and great-grandson, and the rescue of the father by the son in the *Barzunama*. They thereby challenge Firdausi, who made fathers mercilessly murder sons. They rectify the twisted relationship between father and son as it is found in the *Shahnama* so that it comes to agreement with what they think is correct or ideal. In so doing, in a sense they open up a dialogue with Firdausi, continuing to ponder on the meaning of death in the *Shahnama*. They are engaged in the dialogue throughout the narrative and take up every opportunity to voice their concern, which crystallizes into the recursive treatment of the filicidal theme. This continued dialogue with the *Shahnama* informs every aspect of the *Barzunama*, which clearly represents a reaction to the expected reception of the story of Rustam and Suhrab.

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46 A woman *naqqal*, Gord Afarid, has changed the ending of the story of Rustam and Suhrab because she cannot bring herself to kill Suhrab. Her decision seems to have been determined by her reception of the story as a member of the audience. Rana Salimi, "A new voice on the public stage".

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A New Manuscript of the *Shahriyarnama* Attributed to Mukhtari of Ghazna from the Collection of the Ancient India and Iran Trust*

Maria Szuppe

Among the *ca.* 80 Persian manuscript volumes of the Sir Harold W. Bailey collection housed at the Ancient India and Iran Trust [hereafter: AIIT] in Cambridge,¹ Pers. 2.02 contains two epic texts in verse that have not been precisely described; they were, however, recognized by the *collectionneur* as belonging to Firdausi's *Shahnama* cycle.² Based on these indications and a rapid review, the manuscript was thus registered in the handlist and the preliminary account of this collection.³

The two texts from this volume occupy respectively fols. 1v–130v and 131v–349v and have a similar layout and handwriting. Neither has a proper colophon, a date of the copy or the name of the copyist. However, the first of these

* I feel indebted to the Late Professor Sir Harold W. Bailey who, in 1994, entrusted his manuscript collection housed at the Ancient India and Iran Trust to my inexperienced hands to produce a handlist. My warm thanks go to Dr Ursula Sims-Williams of the British Library and Honorary Librarian of the AIIT for her friendly and professional help, François de Blois for his consultations (Sept. 2005), and the Board of Trustees of the AIIT for their support for this project over the years. I am also grateful to Gabrielle van den Berg and Charles Melville for having included me in one of their workshops on the *Shahnama* traditions (Leiden University, 2009), which was for me a quite unexpected—as I do not work on literature—but very rich and fruitful invitation. I owe thanks to Francis Richard, Samra Azarnouche and Poupak Rafii-Nejad from the 'Mondes iranien et indien' research unit (UMR7528 CNRS-Sorbonne nouvelle-EPHE-INALCO) for their learned and friendly help.

- 1 This collection is currently being analysed and described in view of the publication of its full catalogue as a volume of Series Catalogorum (Istituto per l'Oriente "C.A. Nallino", Rome, and CNRS UMR7528 Mondes iranien et indien, Paris).
- 2 The title of the book is noted as "Shah-nama" on the verso side of the folio preceding the text (Bailey Pers. 2.02/1, f. 01v), in Persian and in English, while the same title and the name of Firdausi is noted in English on f. 02r before the text.
- 3 Szuppe, "A preliminary account of the Persian manuscripts".

works bears a mention of “*daftar-i Shahriyar*” indicated on the final fol. 130v, and the second one “*daftar-i Rustam*” on fol. 341v.⁴

The layout, the hand, and the binding, all point to an Indian origin of the volume (see Fig. 5.1). The printed *ex-libris* of an earlier owner is pasted on the inside cover of the upper plate and reads “Trevor Wheler” (see Fig. 5.2). Its presence suggests that the volume can certainly be dated not later than the last quarter of the 18th century, and probably some time before, thus confirming—as will be seen—the original Mughal identification. At least two other manuscripts of the Sir Harold Bailey Persian collection from the AIT can be identified as having previously belonged to Trevor Wheler’s library. The first is a copy of Husain Kashifi’s *Anvar-i suhaili* (Pers. 2.04, dated 1104/1693), which bears the same *ex-libris* as our manuscript. More significantly, the second one, an *Insha’-yi Harkan* (Pers. 1.12, no date of copy), has the British owner’s handwritten signature reading: *Trevor Wheler, Lucknow, June 23, 1781* (see Fig. 5.3).⁵ Both of these manuscripts are also of Mughal origin.

Trevor Wheler (later Sir Trevor)⁶ was an officer of the financial administration of the British East India Company [hereafter: EIC], who, in the 1780s, worked as accountant assistant for the British Resident to the court of the Nawab of Oudh (Awadh).⁷ He is reputedly depicted in a well-known painting known as “Colonel Mordaunt’s Cock Match” completed in 1788 by Johann Zoffany (1735–1810), who accompanied Warren Hastings, the Governor-General of Bengal (in office during 1774–85), on a visit to Lucknow in June 1784. Numerous historical figures are represented in the painting, among whom the

4 This indication concerning the *daftar-i Rustam* is accompanied by a later note stating that some folios are missing: *chand varaq kam shuda-ast*.

5 In the preliminary description of this collection, Szuppe, “A preliminary account”, 93, Pers. 1.12 had not yet been identified as belonging to Trevor Wheler: only Pers. 2.02 and 2.04 are mentioned as such.

6 Trevor Wheler (1763–1830) was a son of the Rev. (later Sir) Charles Wheler, vicar of Leamington (Warwickshire) and prebendary of York, the 7th Baronet of Westminster. Trevor inherited the title as the 8th Baronet. One of his uncles, Edward Wheler, was an East India Company director (he died in Calcutta in 1783). See *The Rugby Register*, 60 (for the entrances in 1771); Betham, *The Baronetage of England*, II, 162.

7 In several reports and correspondences of the EIC, Trevor Wheler is named as the 4th assistant to the British Resident John Bristow (Resident in particular in 1780–81, and 1782–83, while Nathaniel Middleton was Resident during 1781–82), with an allowance of 5,000 rupees a year; see *Correspondence in India*, II, 248; also in different reports and documents, as well as articles of charges against Warren Hastings, for example Burke, *The Works of...*, Part XVI: “*Misdemeanours in Oude*,” letter XC1, 227. In addition, copies of letters signed by Trevor Wheler are included in the *Appendix to the India Courier Extraordinary*, IV, year 1776.

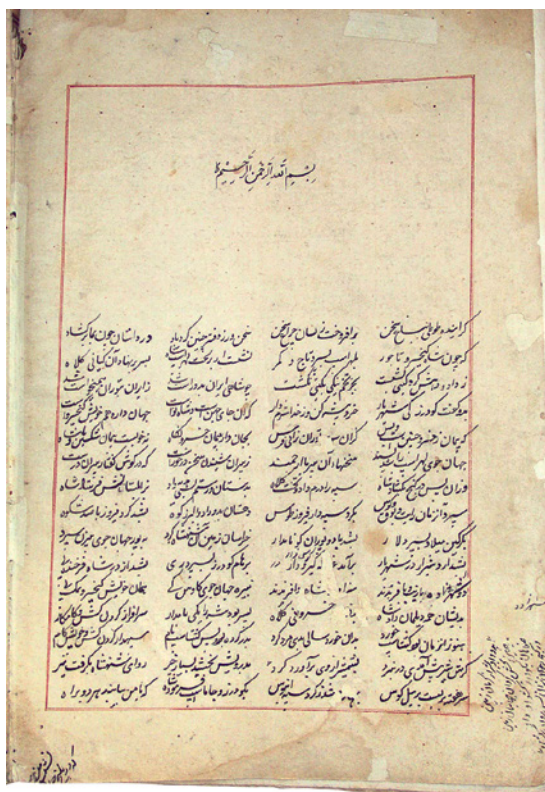


FIGURE 5.1

Ms. Bailey Pers. 2.02/1, fol. 1v,
Shahriyarnama, attributed to
Mukhtari, incipit. © Courtesy of
the Ancient India and Iran Trust,
Cambridge.



FIGURE 5.2 Ms. Bailey Pers. 2.02/1, inside upper cover, the ex-libris of Trevor Wheler © Courtesy of the Ancient India and Iran Trust, Cambridge.

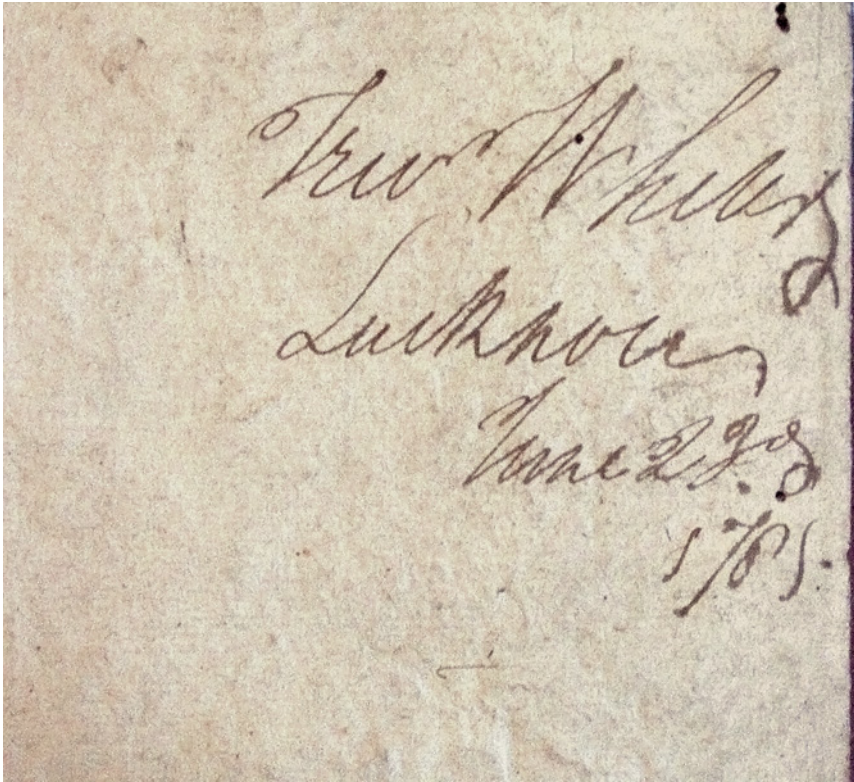


FIGURE 5.3 Ms. Bailey Pers. 1.12, folio before the text, Trevor Wheler's ownership signature, dated Lucknow June 23rd, 1781. © Courtesy of the Ancient India and Iran Trust, Cambridge.

Nawab of Oudh, Asaf al-Daula Amani (r. 1775–97), and Colonel John Mordaunt, chief of the Nawab's bodyguard, as well as other local and European members of Asaf al-Daula's entourage: among the Westerners, Antoine Polier (ca. 1741–95), several military men and officials of the EIC, and some Residency staff. Trevor Wheler is shown sitting on a stool beside the dais conversing with General Claude Martin (1735–1800).⁸

A closer analysis of the Bailey Pers. 2.02 from the AIIT shows that the first of the two poetical texts (1) is certainly not an excerpt from the *Shahnama* but a complete copy of a rare *masnavi* poem, written using the *mutaqarib* metre.⁹

8 Several versions of this painting are documented. Since 1994, the picture remains in the holdings of the Tate Gallery, London (on display in room 1780). For a view of it, see the website: <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/zoffany-colonel-mordaunts-cock-match-to6856>.

9 On Persian prosody and metrics, cf. Elwell-Sutton, *The Persian metres*; and more recently, Landau, *De rythme & de raison*.

The poem evidently belongs to the *Shahnama* later epic tradition; it recounts the story of the adventures of Shahriyar, one of the great-grandsons of the hero Rustam, mostly set in an Indian context.¹⁰ The manuscript is a complete copy, with the beginning and the end, and shows no lacunae. The text, arranged in four columns, 25 lines per page, numbers over 12,000 distiches (*bait*s). After the *bismillah* (fol. 1v), it opens with the following verses (see Fig. 5.1):

گراینده طوطی بباغ سخن	بر افروخت ز لسان چراغ سخن
سخنور ز دفتر چنین کرد یاد	در داستان چون بما بر گشاد
که چون شاه کیخسرو تاجور	بلهراسپ بسپرد تاج و کمر
نشست از بر تخت لهراسپ شاه	بسر بر نهاد آن یکانی کلاه

The final verses of the poem (Pers. 2.02/1, fol. 130r) reveal its title, under the form of *Qissa-yi Shahriyar* ('The Tale of Shahriyar'), the name of the author who refers to himself as Mukhtari, and the name of his patron given as Mas'ud Shah, 'a rose from the garden of Mahmud Shah' (*gul-i bagh-i bustan-i Mahmud Shah*), and indicate that the author took three years to compose his work (see Fig. 5.9). This textual information points to the fact that we could be dealing with a manuscript of a work by the famous poet of the Ghaznavid period, 'Uthman Mukhtari (fl. end 5th/11th and beg. 6th/12th c.),¹¹ who spent part of his life at the court of Sultan Mas'ud [111] b. Ibrahim (r. 1099–1115), ruler of Ghazna and a great-grandson of Sultan Mahmud (r. 997–1030), the celebrated founder of the Ghaznavid dynasty.¹² Indeed, although this precise information

10 This identification, in 2005, was presented publicly for the first time at the workshop *The Reception of Shahnama (II)*, organised at the University of Leiden by Dr Gabrielle van den Berg in January 2009; cf. Szuppe, "Copying the *Shahnama* and the *Shahnama* cycle stories".

11 Siraj al-Din Abu 'Umar 'Uthman b. 'Umar (or: Muhammad) Mukhtari Ghaznavi; cf. Safa, *Tarikh-i adabiyat dar Iran*, II, 501.

12 Mukhtari was also present at the court of his sons Shir-zad b. Mas'ud (508–9/1115–16) and Malik Arslan b. Mas'ud (r. 509–11/1116–17), and survived until the period of the reign of the latter's successor Bahram-Shah, that is at least until 511/1117; de Blois/Storey, *Persian literature*, v, 429, and his references; also Safa, *Tarikh-i adabiyat dar Iran*, II, 501–2, and Mirzoev & Boldyrev, *Katalog vostochnykh rukopisei*, II, 62–63, description n° 352, which indicates his date of death as between 554 and 564/1149 and 1159. On the details of the Ghaznavid history, see the reference works by the Late Clifford Edmund Bosworth, *The Ghaznavids*; idem, *The Later Ghaznavids*; idem, "Ghaznavids"; etc. On the literary context of the later Ghaznavid courts, see Sharma, *Persian poetry at the Indian frontier*.

is not found in any known biographical anthologies of poets,¹³ it has now been admitted that Mukhtari of Ghazna could be the author of a *masnavi* poem in Persian entitled *Shahriyarnama*—an epic story of life and deeds of Shahriyar son of Barzu, son of Suhrab, son of the *Shahnama* warrior hero Rustam.¹⁴ The work is thus considered as one of numerous *Shahnama* cycle ‘secondary epics’, or to use modern vocabulary a *Shahnama* spin-off, such as the *Faramarznama*, *Barzunama*, *Garshaspnama* and others, of the Sistani tradition, stories that are often set in lands more or less far away to the east of Iran, especially in the Indian subcontinent.¹⁵ It must be underlined that the character of Shahriyar does not feature in the *Shahnama* itself, and appears only in his own epic story.

Until 2005 when the Bailey copy was identified in the AIT collection in Cambridge, the poem attributed to Mukhtari had been known from two manuscripts in fragmentary form only, and as such included in a modern edition of Mukhtari’s *Divan*.¹⁶

Two Previously Reported Manuscripts of the ‘Mukhtari’ *Shahriyarnama*

Literary surveys and library catalogues indicate two manuscripts referenced in world collections that can be considered as copies of Mukhtari’s

-
- 13 Remark made already by Charles Rieu, *Catalogue of the Persian manuscripts*, II, 543a. For example, in the 15th century, Daulatshah Samarqandi, *Tadhkira*, 74–75, mentions ‘Uthman Mukhtari and his links to the court of Sultan Ibrahim Ghaznavi in the *tabaqa* 2 (entry n° 8) of his reference anthology, but says nothing of the existence of this epic.
 - 14 Davis, “Epics, Persian”, 233, mentions the *Shahriyarnama* among the poems by unknown writers in his entry on Persian epics of the *Shahnama* cycle. On the *Shahnama* cycle epics of the post-Firdausi period, and in particular the importance and the place of Rustam’s descendants (‘Sistani warriors’) of the ‘younger generation’, i.e. grandchildren and great-grandchildren of Rustam, see the seminal study by Marjolijn van Zutphen, *Farāmarz, the Sistāni Hero*, 129–34 and *passim*, in which different aspects of the *Shahriyarnama* are also thoroughly discussed. Also, de Blois/Storey, *Persian literature*, v, 432–35. In his work on the Persian literature, Zabih-Allah Safa, *Tarikh-i adabiyat dar Iran*, II, 502–5, also discusses a number of issues pertaining to the study of the *Shahriyarnama*; further, de Blois, “Epics”; and Jalal al-Din Huma’i’s “Introduction” to his 1382/2003 edition of the *Shahriyarnama* fragments, included in Mukhtari’s *Divan* (see n. 16 below).
 - 15 Van Zutphen, *Farāmarz, the Sistāni hero*, 207–12, in particular for the detailed summary of Shahriyar’s story.
 - 16 The *Divan-i ‘Uthman-i Mukhtari* was edited by Jalal al-Din Huma’i in 1341/1962, and re-edited with a slightly revised introduction in 1382/2003. The text of the *Shahriyarnama* is found on pp. 797–844.

Shahriyarnama, or at least of a poem that claims to be attributed to him. Both copies appear as of the later post-Timurid period, and are more or less defective; they have been generally considered as presenting important problems in regard to identification, attribution, dating, and textual analysis.¹⁷ Their interrelationship and the relation to another possibly relevant manuscript, the so-called ‘Bankipore’ or ‘Farrukhi’ *Shahriyarnama*,¹⁸ have been discussed in detail by de Blois as well as by van Zutphen, who also mention the present copy and give an outline of previous researches on the subject;¹⁹ thus, below, we will only keep to the elements essential to this presentation.

British Library, London: Add. 24,095

The first of these *Shahriyarnama* manuscripts, and the best known, is very short and essentially fragmentary; it is included in a volume kept at the British Library in London under the shelf mark Add. 24,095.²⁰ The copy is described in Charles Rieu’s reference catalogue of Persian manuscripts as composed of “five disconnected fragments” of two Persian epic texts: in fact, sixteen folios in all, illustrated by twelve full-page miniature paintings of clearly Indian origin, and thus associated with Mughal production.²¹ The copy is datable between the 17th century—the date suggested by Rieu in view of the handwriting and

17 In general, the extant manuscripts of all Persian secondary epics of the *Shahnama* cycle are late, since, basically, they do not predate the 16th century; Francis Richard, personal communication 12 Oct. 2015.

18 The manuscript, on which we cannot comment here in detail, is kept at the Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library in Patna (Bankipore), n° 1798, and was at one time suspected as being a possible copy of Mukhtari’s work. More on it below.

19 De Blois/Storey, *Persian literature*, v, 434–5; van Zutphen, *Farāmarz, the Sistāni hero*, 129–34. Earlier, Rieu, *Catalogue of the Persian manuscripts*, II, 543a–b; Safa, *Tarikh-i adabiyat dar Iran*, II, 502–5; Beygdeli [Bigdeli], “*Shahryār-nāma-yi ‘Uthman-i Mukhtari*”; Aini, “Concerning the study of classical Persian-Tadjik epic”; Mirzoev & Boldyrev, *Katalog vostochnykh rukopisej*, II, 62–63.

20 This is the manuscript used by J. Huma’i in his edition of Mukhtari’s *Divan*.

21 De Blois/Storey, *Persian literature*, v, 433, stated that ‘the question is whether the first three fragments in the London manuscript really all belong to the same poem.’ Van Zutphen, *Farāmarz, the Sistāni hero*, 131–32, has since discussed this issue again in view of the present discovery (discussion partly referring to Szuppe, “Copying the *Shahnama* and the *Shahnama* cycle stories”). Rieu, *Catalogue of the Persian manuscripts*, II, 543b, suggested the miniatures could be associated with the Mughal 17th-century style. Titley, *Miniatures from Persian manuscripts*, entry n° 283 “Mukhtārī”, seems to suggest the 18th or 19th century, after the examination of the illustrations. Some of them have been reproduced in black and white in J. Huma’i’s edition of the *Shahriyarnama* British Library fragments included in Mukhtari’s *Divan* (ed. 1341, and 1382). We cannot comment on

layout—and the year 1861, when the manuscript was already in the hands of British booksellers,²² and was produced in India.

According to the catalogue, the five text fragments [I–V] are all in a mixed order; the first three of them contain discontinued fragments of the *Shahriyarnama* and the other two, those of another epic text (also discontinued) featuring the hero Isfandiyar, and identified as drawn from the text of the *Shahnama*, namely the cycle of Rustam.²³ The codicological situation appeared confused to the point that it has not been clear to the previous researchers how many of these fragments—apart from the one bearing the final lines of the *Shahriyarnama*, the author's penname and the mention of his patron (fragment III, fol. 14v)—could be identified with certainty as belonging to Mukhtari's poem.

The five Add. 24,095 fragments can be listed as follows:

- I. fols. 1r–11r *Shahriyar* (adventures of Faramarz and of Shahriyar in India, Sarandib, Sistan ...)
- II. fols. 12r–13v²⁴ *Shahriyar* (story of Zal [Rustam's father] at Sulaiman's court)
- III. fol. 14r–v *Shahriyar* (the end of the poem)
- IV. fol. 15r–v *Isfandiyar* (slaying of Arjasp)
- V. fol. 16r–v *Isfandiyar* (claiming the throne from Gushtasp)

Tajik Academy of Sciences, Dushanbe: Ms. 17/1

The other manuscript belongs to the holdings of the Tajik Academy of Sciences in Dushanbe (Ms. 17/1, fols. 1v–59v).²⁵ The copy is incomplete: the text, without

them here; the list of subjects is given in Titley, *Miniatures from Persian manuscripts*, entry n° 283.

22 1861 is the *terminus ante quem* indicated by the paratext: a handwritten note on the blank folio after the text of the Add. 24,095 reads “Purchased of B. Quaritch. 20th March 1861”, suggesting that the volume must have been produced some time before it arrived in the possession of the booksellers Bernard Quaritch (Ltd.) in London; another note, by the same hand, indicates “16 Folios, Aug. 1867 [sign.]” (id.).

23 Rieu, *Catalogue of the Persian manuscripts*, II, 543a–b. Thus also in de Blois/Storey, *Persian literature*, V, 433.

24 The Persian text is on the recto side of each of these folios while the verso sides are each occupied by a full-page illustration, identified as follows in Titley, *Miniatures from Persian manuscripts*, entry n° 283: f. 12v, ‘Zâl before Sulaimân’; f. 13v, ‘Zâl having defeated Ahriman in a trial of strength shows Sulaimân the arm he tore off’.

25 Inventory number: 3218 (cf. Tajik library stamp on the folio before the beginning of the text). The manuscript was first introduced to the scholarly community by Kamaloddin

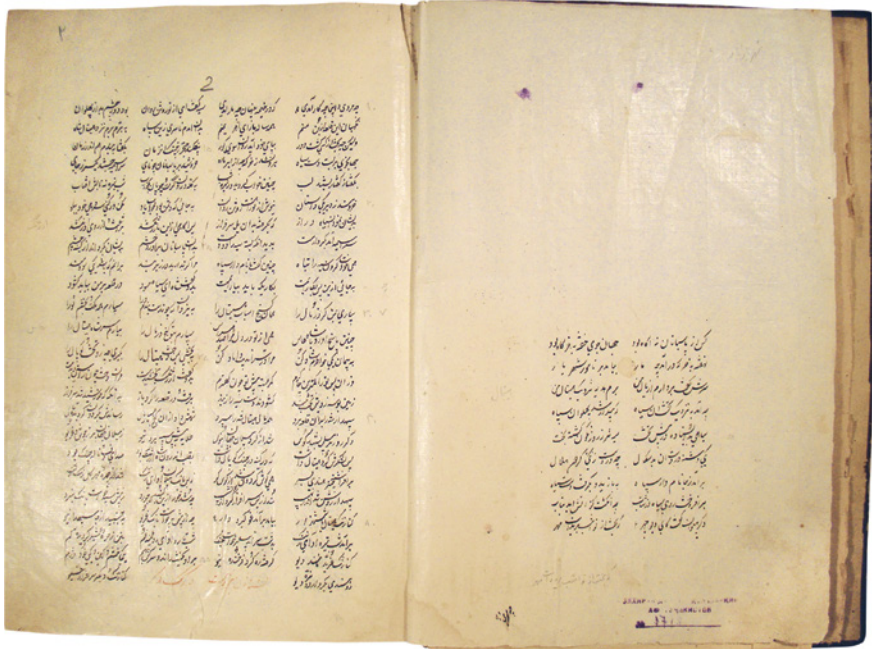


FIGURE 5.4 *Dushanbe Ms. 17/1, fols. 1v–2r, Shahriyarnama, the beginning of the text* © The Library of the Tajik Academy of Sciences, Dushanbe.

the *bismillah*, begins in the middle of a chapter—apparently, having been copied from an imperfect original—and misses the end, obviously the final folios having been lost at some point prior to the re-binding. The text is laid out in four columns (24 lines per page),²⁶ with titles of chapters rubricated (see Fig. 5.4).

S. Aini (1963). It is described in Mirzoev & Boldyrev, *Katalog vostochnykh rukopisei*, II, 62–63, description n° 352, and in Gh.-H. Beygdeli's article in Persian, "Shahriyarnama-yi 'Uthman-i Mukhtari". It was published in Tehran (1358/1979) as a facsimile of Beygdeli's handwritten copy of the original, made in 1977 (cf. Beygdeli's colophon on p. 189 of the edition), reproducing the corrections and marginal additions of Ms. 17/1, but not the original layout as the text is here in two columns, and also has some footnotes by the editor. More issues concerning this manuscript have recently been discussed by de Blois/Storey, *Persian literature*, v, 433–34, and Van Zutphen, *Farāmarz, the Sīstāni hero*, 129–30.

- 26 Except for the first folio (f. 1v) where the text is laid out in two columns. The copy has annotations by the editor Gh.-H. Beygdeli (see n. 25 above): the verse numbering, and some text re-transcriptions in the margins.

The Dushanbe copy is also bound in one volume with another epic poem belonging to the *Shahnama* spin-offs, the *Barzunama* (ms. 17/11, fols. 60r–155v, beginning and end missing), recounting the story of the warrior Barzu or Burzu, the father of Shahriyar and a grandson of Rustam.²⁷

Judging from the layout and the writing, this copy is most probably of late Indian origin as well. The copy is not dated, but on fols. 15r and 29r it bears notes inscribed in the top left corner of the margin. The date “1228” (i.e., from 4 January to 24 December 1813) remains clearly legible on fol. 15r: it becomes for us the *terminus ante quem* for this copy, until further investigations.²⁸ In 1926, the copy was acquired in Tehran (Iran) by a Russian-Soviet scholar who specialised in Persian literature, Konstantin Chaykin (1889–1938).²⁹ Chaykin worked as translator of the Plenipotentiary Representative in Azarbaijan (1920–21) and in Iran (1921–26). He was interested in manuscripts, of which he collected and brought many from Iran to Russia.

Chaykin's two handwritten notes in Persian (both signed) are found on the pages before the beginning of the text.³⁰ The first note is pencilled on the inside of the upper plate (see Fig. 5.5a). Below a sort of a “table of matters” giving the contents of the volume (*a. Shahriyarnama, varaq-i 1–60 / b. Barzunama, varaq-i 60–156*), the pencilled text says that the book (*kitab*) is ‘composed of two parts (*bahra*)’, of which the first is a fragment (*qismat*) of the *Shahriyarnama*

27 This is quite an interesting association, in view of the fact that the *Barzunama* is a text frequently interpolated with Firdausi's epic itself, especially in later period after mid-16th century; cf. Van den Berg, “*Borzu-nāma*,” and her detailed bibliography; de Blois/Storey, *Persian literature*, v, 568–71. See also Yamamoto, *The oral background of Persian epics*, and Van Zutphen, *Farāmāz, the Sistāni hero*, 121–28. On the phenomenon of the *Shahnama* text interpolations, see Davis, “Interpolations to the text of the *Shahnameh*”.

28 The date on f. 15r escaped the attention of the authors of the Dushanbe catalogue (cf. Mirzoev & Boldyrev, *Katalog vostochnykh rukopisej*, 11, 62–63). On f. 29r, the used margins were trimmed (certainly, in the process of rebinding of the volume): the actual note was cut away and only few letters of it remain. Based on palaeographical arguments, Francis Richard suggests that the copy belongs to the 18th century (personal communication, 13 Oct. 2015).

29 Konstantin Ivanovich Chaykin [Чайкин/Čajkin] (1889–1938) was a linguist and a specialist in Persian literature. Since 1927, he was Teacher of Persian, then Assistant Professor (*docent*), and then Professor (since 1935) at the Moscow Oriental Institute (*Moskovskij Institut Vostokovedenija*), and author of the first book in Russian on Persian classical poetry. In 1938, he fell victim to Stalinist repression and was arrested on 21 February, accused of spying, and shot on 27 April. He was rehabilitated on 18 July 1957. See Vasil'kov & Sorokina 2003, s.v. (available online: <http://vostokoved.academic.ru/632/>)

30 These notes are also described by Beygdeli, “*Shahriyarnama-yi 'Uthman-i Mukhtari*,” and reproduced in his edition of the poem (Tehran 1358/1979).

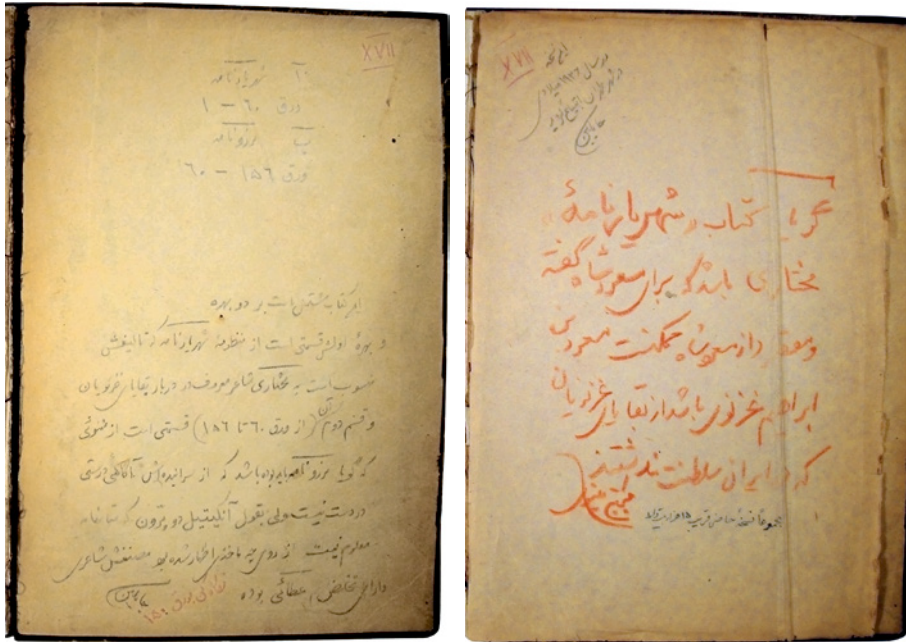


FIGURE 5.5a–b Dushanbe Ms. 17/1, folios preceding the text: (a) note signed by K. Chaykin, in black; (b) note signed by M. Minovi, in red © The Library of the Tajik Academy of Sciences, Dushanbe.

attributed to Mukhtari, ‘the famous poet of the Ghaznavid court’, and the second a *masnavi* [poem], which would ‘reputedly’ (*guya*) be the *Barzunama*.

There follows, in red pencil, an addition indicating: *nigah kun bi-varaq-i 150* (‘see folio 150’),³¹ certainly by the same hand as the ‘red pen’ inscription on the following page, described below.

The second note, also signed by Chaykin, is on the blank folio before the beginning of the poem, verso, upper left. It gives precisions concerning the circumstances of the purchase of the manuscript in Tehran, in 1926: *in nuskha dar sal-i 1926 miladi dar shahr-i Tehran ibtiya’ gardid. Chaykin*.

31 This note refers to a particular line of the *Barzunama* (on f. 150r) where, as some had argued in the past (esp. A.H. Anquetil-Duperron, and E. Blochet), could be found the penname of the author of the poem, ‘Ata’i, thus opening some possibilities of identification (a poet of a similar penname was attached to the court of Sultan Ibrahim Ghaznavi, r. 1059–99); however, as has now been demonstrated, this hypothesis remains most fragile, cf. de Blois/Storey, *Persian literature*, v, 568–69; Van Zutphen, *Farāmarz, the Sistāni hero*, 121–22.

The main part of the folio is occupied by yet another Persian note (5 lines of text), written in red by the same hand as the short red indication previously reported (see Fig. 5.5b). It essentially repeats the same information stating that the book is the *Shahriyarnama* by Mukhtari, and that the ruler mentioned [as the patron of the poet] might be Mas'ud b. Ibrahim Ghaznavi. The note is signed by the Iranian scholar Mojtaba Minovi.³²

It is followed by a smaller handwritten indication that the present copy (*nuskha-yi hazir*) contains in total (*majmu' an*) close to 15 thousand *bait*s. Indeed, in the present state, the *Shahriyarnama* counts ca. 5,000 *bait*s, and the *Barzunama*, ca. 10,000 *bait*s.

The Bailey Pers. 2.02 Versus the Two Previously Known Manuscripts

The coming to light of the AHIT copy from the Bailey collection at last enables us to compare the text of the two previous fragmentary manuscripts with a complete manuscript, beginning to end. We would thus be able to appreciate the differences in the total number of *bait*s, the order of chapters and of the verses, the opening and the beginning lines, and the relationship of this text to the second epic text at present bound in one volume together with this one.

In this respect, several interesting issues might be signalled in this short note, in the hope that they could interest other scholars as future objects of study.

One or More Texts?

The first of these issues has naturally already attracted the attention of earlier scholars, namely the relationship between the two known copies, i.e. the London Add. 24,095, and the Dushanbe Ms. 17/1. In this respect, and based on internal evidence from the text, the question arose of determining if they represent two copies of one epic work, possibly two different versions of the same, or if they are two different works devoted to the same subject (Shahriyar); in any case one would be early (Add. 24,095) and one late and of poorer poetic quality (17/1).

The Add. 24,095 *Shahriyarnama* fragments add up to 738 distiches, the Dushanbe Ms. 17/1 counts 5,185 distiches, while the "complete" Pers. 2.02/1 has

32 Cf. Omidshahar, "Minovi, Mojtaba", for a short bio-bibliography of Mojtaba Minovi (1903–77).

over 12,000 distiches. The verse comparison was made quite difficult by the fact that the only “certified” folio of Add. 24,095 was the fol. 14v (end of the poem with the title, the author, and the patron), and that the corresponding folio was missing from the Dushanbe Ms. 17/1. However, it has been shown that many verses of the two copies were not totally identical, and that many distiches of Dushanbe Ms. 17/1 seemed to lack the poetical skill present in Add. 24,095; it was thus suggested that Dushanbe copy might be another work by a later author.³³

The rapid comparison of Add. 24,095 and Bailey Pers. 2.02/1 shows that the first three Add. 24,095 fragments (I, II, III, as defined by Rieu, cf. above) belong without any possible doubt to the same *Shahriyarnama*, as their text agrees with the corresponding verses present in Bailey Pers. 2.02/1, given in the same order and with no substantial differences.³⁴

Furthermore, the scrutiny demonstrates that the fragments II and III contain consecutive verses of the poem and correspond precisely to the text present in Pers. 2.02/1 from fol. 128r to fol. 130v (end of the poem). In fact, they constitute three sequential folios that must now be considered as one fragment (II *plus* III), i.e. fols. 12r to 14v (end of the poem), and not two fragments (II *and* III).

As far as the Dushanbe Ms. 17/1 is concerned, the comparison with Bailey Pers. 2.02/1 also enables us to determine several points. First, it has been possible to identify the opening distiches of the Ms. 17/1 with the precise verses present in Pers. 2.02/1 at the line 16 of fol. 8v (i.e., verse 691 of the Bailey copy): [see Fig. 5.6]

کس از پاسبانان نه آگاه بود	جهانجوی خفته به خرگاه بود
نهفته به خرگه در آمد چو ³⁵ مار	بشد تا ³⁶ بر نامور شهریار
سرش گفت بردارم از یال من	برم هدیه نزدیک هیتال من
چو ³⁷ آمد به نزدیک تخت آن سیاه	که بیدار شد پهلوان سپاه

33 See in particular the comments of de Blois/Storey, *Persian literature*, v, 434. Van Zutphen, *Farāmarz, the Sistāni hero*, 131, here partly after Szuppe, “Copying the *Shah-nama*”.

34 See the best synthesis of the issue in Van Zutphen, *Farāmarz*, 132–34.

35 Here, Dushanbe Ms. 17/1, f. 1v, l. 2 (v. 2), has *chih*. This variant is often repeated, as Dushanbe Ms. 17/1 uses *chih* quite systematically when *chu* would be expected.

36 Dushanbe Ms. 17/1, f. 1v, l. 2 (v. 2), reads *bi-āmad*, in place of *bi-shud tā*.

37 Dushanbe Ms. 17/1, f. 1v, l. 4 (v. 4): *chih*.

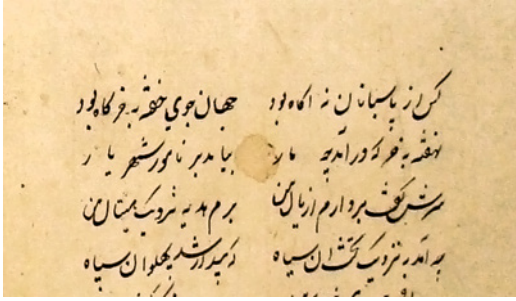


FIGURE 5.6

Dushanbe Ms. 17/1, fol. 1v, vv. 1–4, Shahriyarnama, the beginning of the text © The Library of the Tajik Academy of Sciences, Dushanbe.

We can thus estimate the portion of the *Shahriyarnama*'s text that could be presently missing from the Dushanbe copy at *ca.* 690 *bait*s.

Despite this first-glance similarity between the two manuscripts, it must be emphasized that the comparison shows many variants, individual words or longer phrases, as well as more substantial differences between the text of Dushanbe Ms. 17/1 and that of Bailey Pers. 2.02/1. These differences are the order of distiches (*bait*) and hemistiches (*misra*'), the text variations (absence of certain lines and presence of other lines), and more important text divergences.

To quote an example, let us return to the beginning of the Dushanbe Ms. 17/1, cited above, and make a quick comparison of the first 56 verses of this copy, i.e. the distiches found on its fols. 1v and 2r, up to the beginning of a new chapter. The check shows that, on the whole, the passage remains remarkably close to the corresponding verses in Bailey Pers. 2.02/1, found on fols. 8v–9r (vv. 691–749), but with some differences:

- the corresponding verses of the Bailey Pers. 2.02/1 amount to 59 distiches, that is three more distiches than the Dushanbe copy,
- some recurrent variants are present, such as *chih* (in Dushanbe) systematically instead of *chu* and sometimes instead of *kih* (in Bailey), cf. the text quotation above for an example,
- other variants include the order of the words in a distich, for example: Dushanbe Ms. 17/1, fol. 2r, l. 10 (v. 29): *bid-u guft shah* ..., and Bailey Pers. 2.02/1, fol. 9r, l. 6 (v. 720): *bid-u shah guft*...,

The biggest variations in our sample passage are the three distiches present in Bailey Pers. 2.02/1, but absent from Dushanbe Ms. 17/1. They are not consecutive as they are found in two different places: one *bait* on fol. 8v, l. 17 (v. 693), to be inserted between the corresponding *bait*s 2 and 3 of the Dushanbe copy, (see Fig. 5.7)

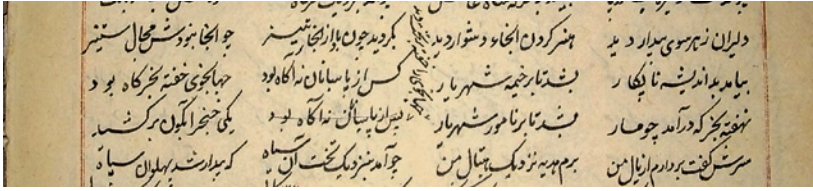


FIGURE 5.7 Ms. Bailey Pers. 2.02/1, fol. 8v, ll. 16–18, showing the verses corresponding to the beginning of the Dushanbe copy (line 2, col. 3 in this photograph), with the additional verse and the text correction inserted vertically in the middle.
(© Courtesy of the Ancient India and Iran Trust, Cambridge).

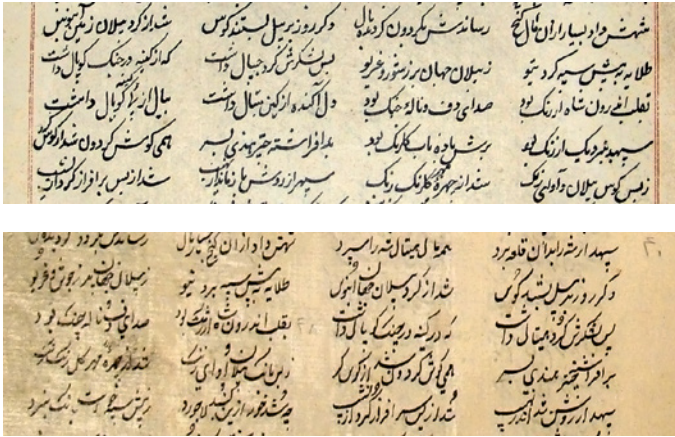


FIGURE 5.8a–b (a) Additional two verses shown in Ms. Bailey Pers. 2.02/1, fol. 9r, ll. 14–15 (© Courtesy of the Ancient India and Iran Trust, Cambridge); (b) the corresponding passage of the Dushanbe Ms. 17/1, fol. 2r, lacking these two lines © The Library of the Tajik Academy of Sciences, Dushanbe.

Pers.2.02/1, v. 963

>جهانجوی را خفته بر تخت دید³⁸ / یکی خنجر آگون بر کشید<

Ms.17/1

[absent]

and two sequential verses on fol. 9r, ll. 14–5 (vv. 737–38), to be inserted between the corresponding *bait*s 45 and 46 of the Dushanbe copy (see Fig. 5.8a–b):

38 This hemistich represents a major scribal correction added certainly during the checking process by the copyist: a whole *misra'*, mistakenly written here (and which is a repetition of the *misra'* from the line above, *pas* [sic] *az pasbanan na aqah bud*), is crossed out to be replaced by the correct one: *jahan-juy-ra khufta bar takht did* (see Fig. 5.7, the correction is squeezed between the two columns of the text in the middle of the line 17 of f. 8v).

Pers.2.02/1, vv. 737–38

بیال از پی کینه کوپال داشت دل آکنده از کین هیتال داشت

برش باده ناب گلرنگ بود سپید بنزدیک ارژنگ بود

Ms.17/1

[absent]

All three ‘extra’ *bait*s are preceded and followed by the text that is identical in both manuscripts.

Interestingly, the situation changes with the beginning of the next chapter of the epics.³⁹ Here, only the first five *bait*s (Dushanbe Ms. 17/1, fol. 2r, ll. 1–3 [vv. 57–61], and Pers. 2.02/1, fol. 9r [vv. 750–54]) remain identical in both manuscripts. After that, the differences become substantial, to the point that whole portions of the poem differ in the two copies. Certainly a detailed textual analysis would be needed here to ascertain the verse order, the absences, and the possible interpolations.

In view of the simultaneous presence of *quasi* identical passages and of substantial text differences, the question that has been asked—without a definitive answer as yet—is whether we have to do here with a distinct work, by a different author, with possible interpolations or direct quotations from the ‘Mukhtari’ *Shahriyarnama*, or whether it is the same epic work but in another version transmitted along a different scribal (or/and oral) tradition, with possibly some other interpolations.⁴⁰

Transmission of the Shahnama-cycle: Traces of an Editorial Tradition?

The second issue is linked to textual studies, transmission, and literary traditions. In all three manuscripts now known—Add. 24,095, Dushanbe 17/1, and Pers. 2.02/1—the *Shahriyarnama* is always followed by a second epic text. The two poems not only are bound together but have evidently the same copyist; in all the cases, the other epic is positioned after the *Shahriyarnama*. Its subject pertains to the *Shahnama* epic tradition, featuring a hero linked in some way to Rustam and his family line (‘Sistani warriors’): in two cases it is Isfandiyar (Pers. 2.02/1, and Add. 24,095) and in one case it is Barzu (Dushanbe 17/1).

39 The chapter title (*kushta shudan-i Tiv*[?] *bi-dast-i Kunarang*), rubricated in both copies, appears on the bottom line of the f. 2r in Dushanbe Ms. 17/1, and on f. 9r, l. 21 in Pers. 2.02/1.

40 Davis, “Interpolations to the text of the *Shahnameh*”; Van den Berg, “*Borzu-nāma*”.

In two of these copies (Bailey Pers. 2.02/1 and British Library Add. 24,095) an additional verse is placed after the end of the actual *Shahriyarnama* poem, which constitutes a sort of a ‘transition verse’ introducing to readers and listeners a change of subject and the beginning of a new story.⁴¹ The ‘transition verse’ is a literary and story-telling device evidently already present in the original copy (*asl*) from which these two volumes were transcribed. It announces that the lines that will follow are drawn from Firdausi [that is from the *Shahnama*], and that they will count the story of Isfandiyar’s fight [against Rustam]. They are quasi identical in both copies:⁴²

ز فردوسی اکنون سخن یاد دار که شد بر سر⁴³ رزم اسفندیار

*Now recall the words of Firdausi / which told of the fight against Isfandiyar*⁴⁴

And this is indeed the subject that could be identified in the two remaining folios of the manuscript Add. 24,095 and of the second part (11) of Pers. 2.02. In each of these copies, the second poem (Isfandiyar’s story) seems to have been written by the same calligrapher as the first one, and have benefited from the same page layout and decoration; thus, evidently, it was placed there on editorial purpose.⁴⁵ It seems quite clear that the bound volume thus produced contained two related texts meant to be read, or recited, in sequence, and thus constituted an editorial whole. The conclusion we can draw here is that both of these manuscripts, Bailey Pers. 2.03/1 and Add. 24,095, not only represent copies of the same work, with very few variants, but also belong to similar literary and editorial traditions.

As for the Dushanbe Ms. 17/1, the copy is missing the end and thus the relevant folio, and therefore it must *per force* remain outside our consideration here. But even if the presence or absence of a possible ‘transition verse’ evidently cannot be discussed, it must be underlined that this copy, too, contains

41 Cf. Van Zutphen, *Farāmarz*, 132–33.

42 Bailey Pers. 2.02/1, f. 130v (last line), and British Library Add. 24,095, f. 14v (last line).

43 Bailey Pers. 2.02/1, f. 130v, reads here: *bar sar-am*.

44 As already mentioned above, the Pers. 2.02/1, f. 130v, adds here a final note: *tamam shud daftar-i Shahriyar* (‘the chapter on Shahriyar has ended’).

45 It could also be added here, that the manuscripts are quite neat and seem to have been made with care. Especially Add. 24,095, which not only has an elaborate layout but the text is inserted within golden frame and is illustrated by paintings (cf. above, nn. 21, 24), but also Dushanbe Ms. 17/1 which has a professional layout and very few corrections. The Pers. 2.02—more modest of aspect, as it only has some rubrics and a rubricated text frame—has also been prepared with great attention as it has evidently been checked by the copyist who added some corrections.

TABLE 5.1 *Principal features of the three known volumes containing the Shahriyarnama epic*

Mss	AIIT (Cambridge) Bailey Pers. 2.02	BL (London) Add. 24,095	Tajik Academy of Sciences (Dushanbe) Ms. 17
Dating	<i>before 1781</i> [17th–18th c.]	<i>before 1861</i> [17th-mid. 19th c.]	<i>before 1813</i> [18th-very beg. 19th c.]
layout	text in 4 columns	text in 4 columns; text diagonally	text in 4 columns (except on f. 1v, in 2 coll.)
text I	<i>Shahriyarnama</i> , 130 fols. (<i>ca.</i> 12,000 <i>b.</i>)	<i>Shahriyarnama</i> , 14 fols. (738 <i>b.</i>)	<i>Shahriyarnama</i> , 59 fols. (5,185 <i>b.</i>)
‘transition verse’	yes	yes	[missing the relevant folio]
text II	‘ <i>daftar-i Rustam</i> ’ (on Isfandiyar), 218 fols.	‘ <i>daftar-i Rustam</i> ’ (on Isfandiyar), 2 fols.	<i>Barzu-nama</i> , 97 fols.
Ms	complete	short fragments	no beginning; no end

a second epic story following the *Shahriyarnama*. Although it is not Firdausi’s episode of Isfandiyar, but an anonymous epic chanting the high deeds of Barzu, Rustam’s grandson and Shahriyar’s father, the relationship is evident as we remain within the group of ‘Sistani warriors’ of Rustam’s line, i.e. within the Sistani epic cycle.⁴⁶ As in the two previous cases, both texts of this volume were copied by the same hand and present strong internal codicological similarities. It can thus certainly be proposed that, as a whole, the Dushanbe copy also reflects a planned editorial project, and—notwithstanding the fact the actual second text differs here—the volume itself can be assimilated with the same literary and transmission traditions of Sistani epic texts as the two other manuscripts.

Relevance of the ‘Farrukhi’ *Shahriyarnama* (Khuda Bakhsh ms. 1798)

A final question that needs a short mention is the existence, in the Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library at Patna, of an epic text of *ca.* 18,000 distiches entitled *Shahriyarnama*, and alike devoted to Shahriyar’s adventures; in the

46 See de Blois/Storey, *Persian literature*, v, 568–71; Van den Berg, “*Borzu-nāma*”; Van Zutphen, *Farāmarz*, 121–28.

past, it had been suspected of representing another copy of the work attributed to Mukhtari, a hypothesis that has now been abandoned.⁴⁷

The library catalogue demonstrates that the last *misra*'s of the final folio are too damaged to remain legible, making the comparison with other copies quite impossible; but the concluding portions of the text differ substantially from the text of the British Library Add. 24,095 *Shahriyarnama*, the only text by that name known at the time of the publication of the catalogue. As we have seen above, if they differ from the Ms. Add. 24,095, they similarly must differ from the end portion of the Bailey Pers. 2.02/1. The Khuda Bakhsh library catalogue admits that the 'authorship of the work is disputed'. But—as the poet refers to himself as 'Farrukhi' in several instances in the text of the poem, and mentions his patron's name as 'Shah Mahmud'—the catalogue nevertheless argues that the copy is a work by Farrukhi Sistani (d. 1037), the famous poet of the court of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna.⁴⁸

Further to the discovery of the Bailey Pers. 2.02/1 copy, we can now add, that not only the concluding lines but the opening *baits* of the Khuda Bakhsh manuscript as well, differ from the lines of the *Shahriyarnama* attributed to Mukhtari. The Khuda Bakhsh copy opens with the following verses:⁴⁹

بنام خداوند هشت و چهار بیوستم آغاز این یادگار

while, as quoted at the beginning of the present paper (also, see Fig. 5.1), the Pers. 2.02/1 and—as we presume now—the Add. 24,095 start with different words. The poet 'Farrukhi' claims the Ghaznavid court patronage, but the patron's name is 'Shah Mahmud' and not 'Shah Mas'ud' as in the 'Mukhtari' *Shahriyarnama*.

In the final portion of the text where the title of the poem (*nama-yi Shahriyar*) and the circumstances of its composition are given, the text remains significantly different in the two manuscripts, apart from one *misra*; the time-span for composing the epic story is indicated here as being 'twelve years' (*du shash sal*):

47 *Khuda Bakhsh Catalogue*, xxxi, 73–77 (description n° 1798). Also, see above n. 18. De Blois/Storey *Persian literature*, v, 111; Van Zutphen, *Farāmarz*, 129–30.

48 *Khuda Bakhsh Catalogue*, xxxi, 73–77 (description n° 1798). For major references on Farrukhi Sistani, see de Blois/Storey *Persian literature*, v, 108–12; de Bruijn, "Farrokhi Sistāni."

49 Here and below, quoted after *Khuda Bakhsh Catalogue*, xxxi, 73 (description n° 1798).

[2nd *misra*‘ damaged and illegible] بسر شد کنون نامه شهریار
 که تا این در آمد سزاوار گنج دو شش سال بردم بدین نامه رنج
 [2nd *misra*‘ damaged and illegible] سپاس آنکه این نامه انجام یافت

while it is ‘three years’ in the ‘Mukhtari’ *Shahriyarnama* (Bailey Pers. 2.02/1, fol. 130r[see Fig. 5.9]; and Add. 24095, fol. 14v):

به توفیق یزدان پروردگار بسر شد کنون نامه⁵⁰ شهریار
 نگهدار تخت و⁵¹ جهان داورا شها شهریارا سرا سرورا
 بگفتم باقبال فرهنگ جوی⁵² چو فرمودیم داستانی بگوی⁵²
 سخن آنچه بد هیچ نگذاشتم سه⁵⁴ سال اندر این رنج بر داشتم

Although there is a poetical pattern that can be recognised in both works, the differences are so considerable that it is clear indeed, as already stated by François de Blois, that the text of the ‘Farrukhi’ *Shahriyarnama* is a different poem from the one included in the three manuscripts discussed above.⁵⁵

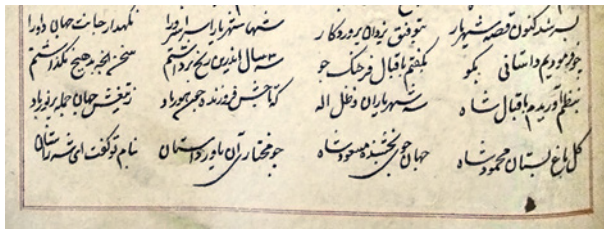


FIGURE 5.9 Final verses of the *Shahriyarnama* attributed to Mukhtari indicating the title, the name of the author and of the patron, and the number of years spent on composing the text: Pers. Bailey 2.02/1, fol. 130r
 © Courtesy of the Ancient India and Iran Trust, Cambridge.

50 Pers. 2.02/1, f. 130r: *qissa-yi*.

51 Pers. 2.02/1, f. 130r: *janat*.

52 Pers. 2.02/1, f. 130r: *bi-gu*.

53 Pers. 2.02/1, f. 130r: *ju*.

54 Pers. 2.02/1, f. 130r: adds here the number 3 (۳).

55 De Blois/Storey, *Persian literature*, v, 111, 433; Van Zutphen, *Farāmarz*, 130.

In addition, based on literary analysis, de Blois demonstrated that the work can hardly be attributed to the early Ghaznavid poet Farrukhi of Sistan, but it should rather be viewed as a late work, belonging to another author using the same penname.

Interestingly, but perhaps not surprisingly in view of the elements presented above, the 'Farrukhi' *Shahriyarnama* ends with a verse referring to another epic, devoted to Gushtasp, father of Isfandiyar and a famous *Shahnama* hero, indicating that: 'here, will be read the *Gushtasptnama* of Firdausi'.⁵⁶

Final Remarks

To sum up, the Bailey Pers. 2.02/1 from the Ancient India and Iran Trust (Cambridge) is not only a new manuscript of a rare epic work, but it appears as an important discovery. Without yet being able to determine if it could be the oldest of the now three known copies, it is the only one for which we know with certainty that it predates 1781, the earliest confirmed date. Significantly also, it is the only copy with the complete number of folios, and could be used as a reference copy. Thus, it seems, it is destined to play a crucial role in the comparative codicological analysis of the two other manuscripts, for the critical textual study of the poem itself, and for researches on the literary and oral traditions around the *Shahnama* epic and its numerous 'satellite' cycles and stories as well.

The comparison shows that Bailey Pers. 2.02/1 and Add. 24095 fols. 1–14v are two copies of the same work, either copied from one another or from a common original manuscript. In addition, Add. 24,095 appears now as composed of two fragments (I and II+III), and not three: Rieu's 'fragments II and III' constitute in fact one piece of text.

The Dushanbe Ms. 17/1 is more recent than these two copies, and the text differences are significant enough to be certain that it could not be copied from the same model original. It is generally considered that the Dushanbe Ms. 17/1 copy could be a later work distinct from the *Shahriyarnama* of Add. 24,095 and now Pers. 2.02/1. Notwithstanding this hypothesis, it would not be impossible, though, to think that the Dushanbe copy could be another version of the same epic, either including interpolations, as it is often the case of 'popular' poems, or copying from an original passed along a different tradition than Bailey Pers. 2.02/1 and Add. 24,095. Either way, the issue should remain unresolved until a thorough and critical textual comparison is conducted between

⁵⁶ *Khuda Bakhsh Catalogue*, xxxi, 75 (description n° 1798).

the Bailey Pers. 2.02/1 and British Library Add. 24,095 group on one side, and the Dushanbe Ms. 17/1 on the other. Additionally, the comparison of the latter with another *Shahriyarnama* copy attributed to a 'Farrukhi' remains one of major tasks in order to push the research on this subject forward.⁵⁷

The presence of a 'transition verse' at the end of the *Shahriyarnama* in Bailey Pers. 2.02/1 and Add. 24,095, followed by a second text (Isfandiyyar's story) identical in both volumes, points to the fact that they proceed from the same storytelling transmission stem. The two texts were apparently supposed to form a sequence, and they thus seem to belong to one editorial project. This tradition is also evidently present in Dushanbe Ms. 17, in spite of the fact that the second text is not Isfandiyyar's but Barzu's story. Binding two texts together in one volume would contribute to anchoring the original poem, here the *Shahriyarnama*, to the Firdausi's *Shahnama* tradition as strongly as possible.⁵⁸ This might suggest that this kind of epic stories could and would circulate in several, if not many, different manuscript versions including extra verses, interpolations, etc., all depending on the readership, the patron of the copyist, the period, or even the region. Finally, the question should be asked about the importance of the oral tradition of epic recitation in the process of transmission of these late epics.⁵⁹

This brings forward the issue of manuscript transmission and circulation, literary tastes and interests of the readers, or auditors, which we cannot discuss here as it would reach far beyond the scope of the present paper. But, indeed, we have seen that all of these three volumes have a strong link with a Mughal context. They have been produced and, apparently, bound in India, at some time between the 17th century and 1781, for Bailey Pers. 2.02; the 17th century and 1861, for Add. 24,095; and ca. 18th century and 1813, for Dushanbe Ms. 17. These elements point to the 17–18th centuries as the most probable dating

57 It might be recalled here that many of the secondary epics are known in more than one version, see esp. the 'long' and 'short' versions of the *Faramarznama*, of the *Barzunama*, etc. (cf. Van Zutphen, *Farāmarz*, Part 3: 'The Shorter and the Longer *Faramarzname*: Manuscripts and Contents'; also idem, 121–28, on the two versions of the *Barzunāma*).

58 In addition, on the interconnection of the stories of Barzu and of his son Shahriyyar—and thus on the relevance of the fact that they are found here in one bound volume—see Van Zutphen, *Farāmarz*, 212, who considers that, in several ways, 'the *Shahryār-nāme* can be regarded as the *Borzunāme*'s sequel.'

59 On the relationship of this literary practice with oral literary traditions, see Yamamoto, *The oral background*. On the collective nature of the archetype of speech, the role of the copyist (or storyteller) in modelling the text (written or oral) in Iranian culture, see for example Smurzyński, "The anthropological aspect of manuscripts' multiplicity in Persian".

span for the three copies; and in any case, they suggest the existence of a literary, and probably oral, tradition of transmission of the Persian epic stories in later Mughal India.⁶⁰

It being the case that the majority of the episodes of the story of Shahriyar are set in different places of the Indian subcontinent, were these stories particularly popular in the region? What kind of a readership market was there for this kind of story? The three manuscripts discussed here were all produced with care. Add. 24,095, especially, is an elegant and nicely decorated and illustrated copy, which certainly was destined for the library of a well-to-do person. Dushanbe Ms. 17/1 is very neatly laid out (the trace of the *mistara* grid is visible), and written with very few text corrections; it also has several blank half-pages either because the original was damaged here, or, maybe, for a further insertion of illustrations.⁶¹ Finally, Bailey Pers. 2.02/1, the less spectacular of the three, has nevertheless a good layout inside a red frame and a professional handwriting; it has been carefully checked by the copyist against the manuscript he was using as the original for his copy, and has thus some textual corrections. In addition, considering that the 'Farrukhi' *Shahriyarnama* has manifestly also a strong link with the early 17th-century Mughal court milieu—the manuscript bears corrections and signatures with the names of officials of the emperors Jahangir (r. 1605–27) and Shah Jahan (r. 1627–58)⁶²—an interesting literary and linguistic research track could lead towards the investigation if these works could even have been Mughal creations, or rewritings, with a false 'ancient authorship' attributions.⁶³

One final remark, entirely on intuitive grounds: would there be any parallel to be drawn between the fact that the hero of the epic, Shahriyar, is a great-grandson of Rustam, and that the ruler to whom the poet Mukhtari dedicates

60 Francis Richard suggests that the role of the Indian Parsi community in the transmission of the *Shahnama* cycle during the Mughal period might be a promising track for further investigation (personal communication, 12 Oct. 2015).

61 Dushanbe, Ms. 17/1, ff. 4r, 6v, 26r, 44r. In some places, the titles of the chapters (normally rubricated) are also left blank: some of them were later filled in by a reader in pencil. The second epic, *Barzunama*, shows the same characteristics.

62 See *Khuda Bakhsh Catalogue*, xxxi, 77 (description n° 1798).

63 There are other examples of 'literary forgeries' in Mughal times, the most famous among which being the case of the *Tuzuk-i Timuri* or *Malfuzat-i Timuri* (Institutes of Timur), allegedly written by Tamerlane (Timur) himself and translated into Persian from 'a Chaghatay original'—a probable creation of the literati of Shah Jahan's court for the purpose of legitimization and identity, cf. Irfan Habib, "Timur in the political tradition and historiography of Mughal India". Compare also the flourishing of the *Tarikh-i Shamsirkhani*, discussed by Van den Berg in chapter 3 of this volume (Eds).

his *masnavi*, Shah Mas'ud (III), is precisely the great-grandson of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna?

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PART 2

The Shahnama in Later Contexts



The *Shahnama* in Timurid Historiography

Michele Bernardini

History and Convention

Persistent reference to the *Shahnama* pervades Persian historiography over the centuries. This situation was frequently taken for granted and in Mongol and Timurid times the use of various images from the *Shahnama* was considered—together with the works of Sa'di and even Hafiz-i Shirazi—as an inevitable aspect of the curricula of the historians.¹ If the *Shahnama* as an historical text remains a debated question,² the opposite side of the issue, namely the presence of the kings of the *Shahnama* in the historical chronicles—appears a secondary aspect. In fact, the risk of limiting oneself to simplistic observations—where the literary characters merely appear as reflections of stereotyped literary tropes, deprived of any significant role in the frame of each specific text—is substantial. A careful analysis demonstrates that the figures of the *Shahnama*, albeit permeating all Timurid historiography according to a sort of generic cultural agenda, are quite foreign to the propagandistic activity of the Central Asian sovereign.

As might appear obvious, the *Shahnama* represented one of the main “classical” references to the idea of kingship—and the exempla taken from this archetypal book were for each king of the medieval Islamic period a sort of paradigm for the construction of his own model of government.³ The use of names taken from this tradition was a distinctive feature of several dynasties (for instance, the Saljuqs of Rum) and certainly deserves further investigation.

1 For a good example of the interest of this historiography and the use of the *Shahnama* in post-Mongol times, see the precious work of Manuchihr Murtazavi, *Masa'il-i 'asr-i Ilkhanan*, 2nd ed., esp. 500–580.

2 Michele Bernardini, “Re storici dell'epica persiana”, 37–48; Julie Scott Meisami, *Persian historiography to the end of the twelfth century*, 41–45; eadem, “The past in service of the present: Two views of history in medieval Persia”, 247–75.

3 We can adopt here the idea defined by Ali Anooshahr, *The Ghazi sultans and the frontiers of Islam*, 27; when considering the use of the *Shahnama* in the *Baburnama* the author makes a useful reference to Heidegger's concept of *Entfernung* “a method of overcoming the barrier of time and space.”

In the case of the Timurids, and in particular during Timur's lifetime, such onomastic references appear to be infrequent. One could remark that only few members of the Barlas clan adopted names from the *Shahnama*—one example being Rustam b. Tughay-Buqa Barlas.⁴ The perception of this Iranian tradition is marked by the adoption of a broad terminology in a didactic way: albeit references to *farr* (kingly charisma), for instance, are recurrent in all the texts, such quotations are limited to a general consideration of an overall idea of kingship, modelled after the Persian manner and transposed onto a further Turko-Mongol context.⁵ In other words, the kings of the *Shahnama* (as well as their characteristics) are good theoretical examples of the reproduction of classical literary models and are frequently taken as references to the creation of a mythology of the activities of the kings.

If one turns his attention to Timur, it can not but be observed that this sovereign was especially attentive to the matter of his origins and that, in his lifetime, he was involved in discussions about his genealogy.⁶ An interesting episode, studied by Walter J. Fischel, which occurred in 1401 in Damascus, serves as an introduction to the issue.⁷ On this occasion, Timur met Ibn Khaldun and invited the historian to formulate a genealogical account of his lineage. A dialogue between them, reported in the *Kitab al-'ibar*, reveals a certain embarrassment on the part of the historian, who attempts to define a sort of convenient genealogy in order to avoid possible reactions from the wrath-inclined Central Asian khan. Following the Persian epic tradition, Ibn Khaldun emphasises that the Turks had taken possession of Khurasan in the time of Afrasiyab and were in the position of claiming a royal descent over the subjugated peoples:

Sovereignty only exists because of internal group loyalty (*'asabiyya*); the greater the group, the greater the extent of sovereignty. All scholars agree that most people of the human race belong to two groups: the Arabs and the Turks. It is known how power was established when they became united in religion following their Prophet [Muhammad]. As for the Turks, their contest with the kings of Persia and the seizure of Khorāsān from Persian hands by Afrasiyab is evidence of their origin from royalty;

4 On him, Shiro Ando, *Timuridische Emire nach dem Mu'izz al-ansāb*, 71–72.

5 Some important considerations about the transformation of the idea of *farr* in the Turko-Mongol world were given by John E. Woods, *The Aqquyunlu: Clan, confederation, empire*, 6–8; see also Anne F. Broadbridge, *Kingship and ideology in the Islamic and Mongol worlds*, 9–10, for the link between the Persian *farr* and the Turkish *qut*.

6 See for example, John E. Woods, "Timur's genealogy", 85–125.

7 Walter J. Fischel, *Ibn Khaldūn and Tamerlane*.

and in their group loyalty (*ʿasabiyya*) no king on earth can be compared with them, not Chosroes nor Caesar nor Alexander nor Nebuchadnezzar. Chosroes was the head of the Persians and their king, but what a difference between the Persians and the Turks! Caesar and Alexander were kings of the Greeks, and again what a difference between the Greeks and the Turks! As for Nebuchadnezzar, he was the head of the Babylonians and Nabateans, but what a difference between these and the Turks!⁸

Ibn Khaldun introduces an idea of ethnicity that clearly reflects the old perception of the *shuʿubiyya* (debate on cultural superiority) with regard to the different peoples inhabiting the Islamic world of his time. Here we can discern, in various places, Jahiz's ideas on Turkish military valour, now re-appropriated in the encyclopaedic spirit of Ibn Khaldun.⁹ In Turkish literature, the figure of Afrasiyab as the progenitor of a Turkish lineage is not new: the Qarakhanid dynasty claimed such lineage and, as Louis Bazin underlined, it was also adopted for Alp ʿAr Tonga, the "Leopard Hero" in the *Qutadgu Bilig*.¹⁰

Moreover, Ibn Khaldun regards the kings of the past as a model for a comparative evaluation of their specific power. The Turks are subsequently celebrated for their ability to wield the greatest power in the Islamic world of this time.¹¹ The dialogue between Timur and Ibn Khaldun continues by considering the figure of Manuchihr in a complex etymologic digression,¹² in which Timur claims to be a descendant of this hero on his mother's side. Finally, having taken leave of Timur, Ibn Khaldun is able to express warily his opinion about Timur's origins: he states that Timur was the guardian of the Chinggisid Mahmud, a descendant of Chaghatay, son of a lady called Surghatmish (*sic*), whom Timur himself married. Ibn Khaldun subsequently goes on calling the Timurids "Tatars" and reveals that they are numerous. They are plunderers and destroyers; they kill the sedentary population; they are cruel and similar to Arab Bedouins.¹³

8 Ibid., 36. About the concept of *ʿasabiyya* adopted by Ibn Khaldun, see Linda T. Darling, "Social cohesion (*ʿasabiyya*) and justice in late medieval Middle East", 329–57.

9 Cf. C.T. Harley Walker, "Jahiz of Basra to al-Fath Ibn Khaqan on the exploits of the Turks", 631–97.

10 Louis Bazin, "Qui était Alp Er Tonga identifié par les Turcs à Afrâsyâb ?", 37–42.

11 The "Turkish question" was largely debated in juridical terms, see for the Mamluks in the 14th century, Najm al-Dīn al-Tarsusi, *Kitab Tuhfat al-Turk, Oeuvre de combat hanafite à Damas au XIV^e siècle*, 61–64.

12 Fischel, *Ibn Khaldūn and Tamerlane*, 37.

13 Ibid., 46. See also M. Bernardini, *Mémoire et propagande à l'époque timouride*, 71–72.

This double (positive and negative) conception provides an opportunity for further consideration: the Persian epic is clearly perceived by Ibn Khaldun as an instrument for the creation of a useful “additional” genealogy of Timur that might compensate for the real one. This may indicate that in this period *Shahnama* genealogy was already regarded as a myth rather than as historical evidence. In his *Storia della letteratura persiana*, Alessandro Bausani has demonstrated the “Euhemeristic” aspect of the *Shahnama*. He argues:

the de-mythologizing operated by Islam, and the ‘Euhemerization’ of ancient mythological legends that had already begun during the Sasanid Age, imply that the great texts of Persian epic literature were not regarded as “real” history. Quite the other way, as repeatedly stated by Firdausi, the epic had more often an artistic, moral, or practical aim rather than one befitting an authentically historical work.¹⁴

The concept of Euhemerism—originating from Euhemerus of Messina (3rd century BC), who wrote a treaty on the “Sacred History” and theorized the historicizing of myth—appears especially useful for the definition of the issue here.¹⁵ To what extent was the attribution of a Persian origin (with reference to the *Shahnama*) symbolic? Certainly, such a genealogy was very useful but not conceived as “real”. It consisted of a sort of literary device, more than a conviction of real belonging. As such, it was certainly applied by the Persian historians, who used the *Shahnama* with great confidence and, at the same time, as an abstract instrument within their chronicles.

Ghiyath al-Din ‘Ali Yazdi and the *Shahnama*

The examples I shall consider are taken from various works. The first is the *Ghazavat-i Hindustan*, or *Sa‘adatnama* by Ghiyath al-Din ‘Ali Yazdi.¹⁶ Written during the first half of the 15th century, this work is a report on the Indian cam-

14 Antonino Pagliaro & Alessandro Bausani, *Storia della letteratura persiana*, 363–64, my translation.

15 On him see Marek Winiarczyk, *Euhemerus von Messene. Leben, Werk und Nachwirkung*.

16 Ghiyath al-Din ‘Ali Yazdi, *Kitab-i Ruznama-yi ghazavat-i Hindustan*, ed. L. Zimin; transl. by A.A. Semenov, Ghijāsaddīn ‘Alī, *Dnevnik pohoda Tīmūra v Indiju*. A new revised edition appeared recently, ed. Iraj Afshar, *Sa‘adatnama* [hereafter cited as *GH*]. See also the trans. by M. Bernardini, Ghijāsoddīn ‘Alī Yazdī, *Le gesta di Tamerlano*. On Ghiyath al-Din ‘Ali Yazdi see John E. Woods, “The rise of Tīmūrid historiography”, 94–95.

paings of Timur, accompanied by an historical introduction that summarizes his earlier campaigns.

The *Ghazavat-i Hindustan* displays a selected use of references to the *Shahnama*: with regard to some characters, these references appear as paradigms of justice, rectitude and military valour. This is certainly the case of Faridun, who is frequently mentioned as an *exemplum* in many quotations. The first occurrence concerns the conquest of Mazandaran; here Timur is described as a Khusrau endowed with the justice of Faridun (*in Khusrau Faridun-i 'adl va dad*), who receives the help of God as exemplified by Qur'an 37:172–173.¹⁷ Timur is again a Khusrau with the virtues of Faridun at the time of the conquest of Azarbaijan in 1386 and in the same passage he appears in comparison with Mahmud, whose kingdom he rebuilt in its full extent (*zahi bastat-i mulk-i padshahi ki mamalik-i mithl-i sultan Mahmud Ghazi tarfi az atraf-i mamlakat-i u-st*).¹⁸ This last comparison is one of the main features of the *Ghazavat-i Hindustan*, even if Ghiyath al-Din 'Ali excludes all references to the *Shahnama*, choosing to mention the Arabic chronicle of Abu Nasr 'Utbi as a model.¹⁹ However the parallelism between Faridun and Mahmud echoes the *Shahnama* again, where such a comparison is natural for Firdausi.²⁰ If Mahmud is an explicit model for the *Ghazavat-i Hindustan*,²¹ his name comprises a dichotomous perception between historiography ('Utbi) and epic (Firdausi).

Together with Alexander the Great, Faridun reappears in the *Ghazavat* at the beginning of the Indian campaign: Timur here “exalts” the earlier exploits of the ancient heroes—obviously outdoing them. Here the author introduces a typical literary device, presenting Timur as the Faridun “of his time” (*Faridun-i ruzgar*) again, with a further allusion to the *ghazw* activity and the diffusion of Islam in India.²² Together with Iskandar and Khusrau, Faridun is mentioned during the Indian campaign as a wealthy king, whose grandeur Timur emulates.

17 GH, 32.

18 GH, 34.

19 GH, 60; the use of the reference to 'Utbi is not unusual in this period. We can mention here the same reference by Ibn 'Arabshah mentioning 'Aziz Astarabadi (who is named 'Abd al-'Aziz), author of a *Bazm u razm* (1398) devoted to the qadi Burhan al-Din of Sivas, who according with Ibn 'Arabshah used 'Utbi as the “main” model for his chronicle (*'Aja'ib al-maqdur fi nawa'ib Taimur*, 189). Other references to 'Utbi can be found in Sharaf al-Din 'Ali Yazdi, *Zafarnama*, ed. Urunbaev, 1068; there is another edition of the *Zafarnama*, by Muhammad 'Abbasi. [Hereafter both the editions of the *Zafarnama* will be quoted as ZYA].

20 Abu'l-Qasim Firdausi, *Shahnama*, ed. Khaleghi-Motlagh [hereafter KM], VI, 135–37.

21 Bernardini, *Mémoire et propagande*, 94–97.

22 GH, 58–59.

Faridun is mentioned in some verses, which precede the fight with Mahmud Shah Tughluq outside Delhi.²³ Later, Faridun is compared with Timur during the conquest of the Siwalik mountains in Northern India; the *ghazw* and the *jihad* are the main object of the enterprise again.²⁴ As in the aforementioned case of Faridun, this figure is presented in a very simple way, with no mention of his deeds, which are taken for granted by the historian. The association of Faridun with the religious aim of the campaign is more interesting. In this respect we can perceive a vague allusion to the character of Faridun as a liberator of Iran in a parallelism with Mahmud/Timur as liberators of the world from heresy and from the “infidels”. Nevertheless, this allusion remains an abstract and hyperbolic association of ideas more than a concrete reference.

A more detailed description is devoted to Khusrau Anushirvan, whose grandeur is reflected in his material wealth and, paradoxically, in the transient quality of the latter: in comparison with Muhammad, Khusrau—like the Qaisar—appears unable to preserve both his treasures and all the countries he conquered (Yemen, Syria and Mesopotamia), which were taken later by the victorious Islamic army. Enunciating a short theory of historiography, Ghiyath al-Din stresses that the chronicles are all that remains of ancient history, and wonders what has become of the palaces of Khusrau and the same Mahmud of Ghazna: the answer is in the fact that the only written evidence of their deeds remains, without any further explanation concerning what kind of text.²⁵

Through a comparison with Timur, Khusrau emerges as the ruler of Arabia and Iran. Timur’s wrath is like the wrath of Khusrau. He is the founder of the law and a warrior. Ghiyath al-Din also uses Khusrau as a touchstone for a comparison with his former patron, the Muzaffarid Shah Mansur, as well as with several Timurid princes like Shahrukh and Pir Muhammad. Timur is as generous as Khusrau; he uses his noble-mindedness for his subjects; he is like Khusrau, when he is liberal to those who have been excluded from the booty, or when he offers gifts to the Indians accepting conversion to Islam. In a hyperbolic image, Timur is also seen as the Khusrau of the *ghazis* during the conquest of a village near the Ganges, where he destroys a Hindu temple.²⁶

The several examples offered here are all typical of the extrapolation of *Shahnama* characters as a literary strategy: they are used to legitimate the hero of the chronicle—as happens in several other works. Some more sophisticated references to other heroes of the *Shahnama* are made in order to

23 GH, 120.

24 GH, 155.

25 GH, 9–10.

26 GH, 139.

express more complicated concepts: while the dichotomy between Iran and Turan permeates the whole chronicle, Afrasiyab appears as an important reference to tyranny, being the owner of the well where Bizhan is imprisoned. In these verses, Ghiyath al-Din introduces a dichotomy between night and day: Bizhan, the hero of a “solar” Iran, is taken to a dark well by the “dark” Turanian king.²⁷ The same image is repeated, when Ghiyath al-Din briefly relates the arrival of Tughluq Timur from Mughulistan to Transoxiana. The legacy of the Qarakhanid’s claim to the inheritance of Afrasiyab is deliberately neglected, perhaps because Timur is now the hero of Iran and Turan—introducing a scope beyond the old dualistic idea and in accordance with a new universal conception of the world. Moreover the deeds of Timur, in particular the *ghazw* and the *jihad*, became one of the main reasons to mention the heroes of the Firdausian tradition (Rustam, Bizhan and Afrasiyab).²⁸

This last point appears to be quite substantial. References to the *Shahnama* by this Timurid author reflect a didactic attitude, with a powerful display of rhetoric and poetic ability; nevertheless, at the same time, Ghiyath al-Din refrains from risking more specific statements that may involve, through a rhetorical use of Firdausi’s work, the exhibition of a personal perspective. In this sense, any reference to the past is purely decorative and never implies any real selection of themes: they are simply excluded by the author. Ghiyath al-Din never mentions Firdausi, who remains a sort of hidden reference in his quotations. At the same time he adopts the reference to Mahmud of Ghazna in a way that could be considered a direct reference to the *Shahnama*: the same *Book of Kings* celebrated the Ghaznavid sultan as the universal lord from India to Rum,²⁹ and the parallelism with Khusrau as a *ghazi*, made by Ghiyath al-Din, could be interpreted as a clear echo of the chapter devoted to Khusrau in the *Shahnama*. In a digression Mahmud is described on his *min-bar* as a promoter of the war against Indian idolaters.³⁰ In fact, a substantial impression of the *Ghazavat* concerns the fact that the real hero of the Indian campaign emulates the Firdausian Mahmud more than the other heroes. This was probably the intention of Timur himself, even if throughout the work of Ghiyath al-Din, the emulation also implies Timur’s superiority over other

27 GH, 10. Cf. Dick Davis, *Epic and sedition*, 167–84.

28 GH, 159.

29 *Shahnama*, KM, I, 21.

30 *Shahnama*, KM, VII, 404.

concrete heroes of the Indian Islamization such as Jalal al-Din Mangubirni,³¹ Tarmashirin Khan³² and Firuzshah Tughluq.³³

Nizam al-Din Shami

The *Zafarnama* by Nizam al-Din Shami was completed immediately before Timur's death (806/1404).³⁴ This author employs only a few references to the heroes of the *Shahnama*: Faridun and the line of the Kayanids are conventionally mentioned together as a model for Timurid protocol in a feast (*ba-rasm-i Faridun va ayin-i Kay*) in the Qishlaq in Qara Bagh.³⁵ Shami takes the story of the duel between Rustam and Isfandiyar as a model for the duel between Amir Khizr and Timur, with the habitual formula, according to which the old battle was forgotten and eclipsed by the new one (*va jang-i vaq'a shud ki qissa-yi Isfandiyar va Rustam-ra faramush gardanid*).³⁶

A particular reference to Jamshid may be of greater interest here—occurring in some verses about the second campaign in the Dasht-i Qipchaq against Toqtamish Khan. On 23 Jumada I (28 April 1391), Timur ordered camp to be established in Ulugh Dag. He reached the top of the mountain and after scanning the landscape he ordered the writing of an inscription on a rock, in order to leave a mark of his power to posterity. The engravers carved a memorial plaque. Shami subsequently adds two verses in a reference to Jamshid, who also had an inscription in stone written as a memento:

شنیدم که جمشید نیکو سرشت / بسر چشمه بر بسنگی نوشت
برین چشمه چون ما بسی دم زدند / گذشتند چون چشم برهم زدند

31 Crossing the Indus river from the s.c. *Chūl-i Jalālī*, also named Chul-i Khusrau by Ghiyath al-Din, *GH*, 75–76. A (voluntary?) mistake of the author (i.e. *GH*), for Bartol'd has demonstrated that Timur crossed the river in the Dankot area, cf. V.V. Barthold, *Turkestan down to the Mongol invasion*, 445.

32 Conquest of the castle of Meerut (Mirat), *GH*, 128–30.

33 Ghiyath al-Din several times mentions this king as one of the main models of Timur. Timur's enthusiastic visit to Jahannuma is a further evidence of this emulation, *GH*, 118–21.

34 Nizam al-Din Shami, *Ẓafarnāma par Nizāmuddīn Šāmī* [hereafter *ZSH*]. On Shami see Woods, "The rise of Tīmūrīd historiography", 85–87.

35 *ZSH*, I, 244.

36 *ZSH*, I, 17.

*I heard that Jamshid of excellent disposition /
wrote on a stone at the top of the spring of the Bar³⁷
'like us, a lot of people rested by this spring /
they passed on when they had closed their eyes'.³⁸*

It is interesting to note that these verses apparently have no relation to the *Shahnama*, but seem to be referred to in other sources, in particular the pre-Islamic ones, probably with an inference to the figure of Alexander/Iskandar.

The existence of the rock in the Dasht-i Qipchaq is corroborated by archaeological evidence: in the 1950s, the Soviet geologist K. Satpayev discovered a block of rock with an inscription of Timur in Arabic and Uyghur Turkish close to the Ulugh Dagħ range.³⁹ Leaving aside questions concerning the authenticity of this stone inscription, one can assume that a certain conceptual difference exists between Shami's description and the text carved in stone. Later, Sharaf al-Din 'Ali Yazdi returned to Shami's account without making any reference to Jamshid.

We could note here that Shami's attempt to use the *Shahnama* as an "erudite" source for the enrichment of his chronicle was later excluded by Yazdi, because he probably considered it wrong. A more detailed and erudite use of Firdausi later was made by Hafiz Abru; and Mirkhwand explicitly states the use of the *Shahnama* as an authority for the history of the ancient kings of Persia, together with other sources such as the *Garshaspnama*.⁴⁰ The numerous references to the main heroes of the *Shahnama* appear to be a reflection of the new intellectual trend of his time; in comparison with Shami's and Ghiyath al-Din 'Ali's rudimentary allusions, Hafiz Abru's work attests to a radical change of attitude. In order to have more substantial evidence of this change we can mention here *en passant* the work of another author, Mu'in al-Din Natanzi, completed apparently between 1413 and 1414, while his general history ends with the 807/1405, the year of the death of Timur. The use of the *Shahnama* is limited in Natanzi's work to a specific question of the local perception of the history of the foundation of Yazd, with a substantial wariness about such misconceptions.⁴¹

37 Here the author alludes to the Vār Fortress, O. Skjærvø, "Jamšid i. Myth of Jamšid", 501–22.

38 ZSH, I, 118.

39 See M. Kramarovskij, "'Kamen' Timura' kak fenomen chingizidskoj istorii i kul'tury", 167–69.

40 Mirkhwand, *Tarikh-i raudat al-safa*, I, 526.

41 Mu'in al-Din Natanzi, *Muntakhab al-tavarikh-i Mu'ini*, 31.

Hafiz Abru and Sharaf al-Din 'Ali Yazdi

Hafiz Abru was a direct witness of the campaigns of Timur, in which he took part from 1380.⁴² Nevertheless, all his historical and geographical works appeared during the reign of Shahrukh, after the death of the Central Asian warlord, and this could be the first significant reason for a change of attitude towards the use of the *Shahnama* too. In comparison with the almost contemporary work of Sharaf al-Din 'Ali Yazdi, the historiography of Hafiz Abru presents some differences, and a comparison of the use of the *Shahnama* by both authors could be interesting for a better understanding of the two different kinds of mentalities. Mentioning a general consideration by John E. Woods, we can consider that "given the largeness of his vision and the scope of his output, Hafiz Abru was certainly the most outstanding historian of his generation and deserves to be considered among the most outstanding intellectuals of the Islamic later middle ages."⁴³

A good example of this divergent intellectual attitude can be observed in the *Zubdat al-tavarikh*, completed by Hafiz Abru after 830/1427. Here, for example, the author explicitly uses Firdausi's work in an erudite way when he mentions a verse in which he declares his complete submission to Shahrukh:⁴⁴

همه بندگانیم شهرخ پرست / من و رستم اسکندر و هرکه هست

We are all slaves, adorers of the rook (shahrukh) / I, Rustam, Iskandar and everyone else

If this could just be taken for a strategic quotation in the introductory part of the text, other similar cases are found in the additions to the *Zafarnama* of Shami, in which the comparison between the *Sahibqiran* and the complete range of the main kings of the *Shahnama* is expressed in one page: a hair of Timur is like hundred *Jamshids* in one place and hundred *Fariduns* in one encampment; a hundred *Kay Khusraus* in one saddle and hundred *Afrasiyabs* on one battlefield.⁴⁵ This part of the text is in an appendix, devoted to the exaltation of Timur after his birth in 736/1336. The broad use of the main figures of the *Shahnama* by Hafiz Abru is repeated in all his works and is a distinctive mark of literary quality.

42 Woods, "The rise of Timūrid historiography", 96.

43 Ibid., 99.

44 Hafiz Abru, *Zubdat al-tavarikh*, I, 45.

45 ZSH, II, 188.

If we compare Hafiz Abru with Sharaf al-Din 'Ali Yazdi, we note a completely different attitude. In Sharaf al-Din's work we find a new prudence towards the ancient literary monument. Like Hafiz Abru, Sharaf al-Din represented a new generation of historians, who wrote after the death of Timur in 1405. In his *Zafarnama*,⁴⁶ Sharaf al-Din introduces the real character of Firdausi in a chapter devoted to the seizure of Qarshi, with the intention of comparing Timur with the other lords of Transoxiana—especially with the Qara'unas, whom this passage is a rare mention in Timurid literature. After the capture and killing of several enemies, Sharaf al-Din points out that the narrative that follows in his chronicle will be presented through the testimony of eye witnesses of the events—not through the boastful (*laf-i guzaf*) use of Firdausi's verses, with their eloquence and rhetoric. He adds some verses by the poet of Tus, devoted to the meaning of *khirad*—but taken from the *Yusuf va Zulaikha* attributed to him,⁴⁷ in order to justify his choice—adding an encomium of Firdausi himself.

The events that are reported integrally and that in the assembly of the literati, some ocular witnesses have directly seen without any disguising (*mudāhinat*), are (here) confirmed, not as the type of boastful words that Firdausi applied in the *Shahnama* out of eloquence and literary refinement for the sake of some people and of which he himself was aware, in his verses on the story of Yusuf—on whom be prayers and peace—and justly said:

I made my composition from all kind of stories / I said in it all that I wanted

All these stories are pure lies (durugh-ast pak) / Two hundred of them are not worth a handful of earth

It is fitting if wisdom laugh / how can wisdom approve of me?

For I lost half of my life / I filled the world with the name of Rustam

46 See here note 19. On Sharaf al-Din 'Ali Yazdi see Woods, "The rise of Timūrid historiography", 99–105. A useful recent contribution of Charles Melville ("Ali Yazdi and the *Shāhnāme*"), offers a good idea of the role of Yazdi in the court of Ibrahim Sultan son of Shahrukh. See also the recent work of İlker Evrim Binbaş, *Intellectual networks in Timurid Iran. Sharaf al-Dīn 'Alī Yazdī and the Islamic Republic of Letters*.

47 Compare here Hermann Ethé, *Yūsuf and Zalīkha by Firdausī of Tūs*, 24. The authenticity of the attribution to Firdausi of this literary work was frequently questioned by scholars, see for example J. Rypka, *History of Iranian literature*, 156. We exclude two verses added by M. 'Abbasi as an insertion of Firdausi's text (cf. their absence from ZYA, ed. Urumbaev, 259–60/ fols. 120r–v); in fact this quotation could be an interesting example of the text editing criteria of 'Abbasi's time.

*What are these accomplished words / engaging the mind night and day?*⁴⁸

Truly this excuse and judiciousness from such a rare incomparable discourse is another of the abundant proofs of his [Firdausi's] excellence and perfection.

May Firdausi be eternally at rest / in the place [paradise: firdaus] of which his name brought good tidings!

These remarks on the use of Firdausi's texts seems to offer a critique of a certain carelessness on the part of his predecessors, for which Sharaf al-Din does not hesitate to use the words of Firdausi himself. Nevertheless, he introduces a distinction between fiction and historiography, in other words between myth and history. He himself declared again his appreciation for the poet of Tus in the *kitab*-*ha* that he included in his *Manzum*⁴⁹ and the existence of a versified version of the *Zafarnama* in the Bibliothèque nationale de France (Suppl. pers. 1766) seems to confirm his conflicting appreciation of the ancient masterpiece.⁵⁰

Some Final Provisional Considerations

Sharaf al-Din's choices are emblematic in their reflection of a certain wariness in the use of the *Shahnama* as a model. It is difficult to trace specific cases of influence on the part of political powers over the choices made by Timurid authors. To return to the vagueness in the use of quotations from the *Shahnama*, one can again stress that this work was a secondary source for Timurid historians. As variously attested by several scholars, Timur spent a large portion of his life attempting to prove his Mongol ancestry—and, as S.M. Grupper, Charles Melville and Maria Subtelny recently demonstrated, the role of the *keshig* institution, as well as the status of the Barlas tribe, were substantial priorities in the Timurid agenda.⁵¹ Nevertheless, one can observe a diffused adoption of various propagandistic stances to counter a wide and systematic campaign

48 ZYA, ed. 'Abbasi, I, 103–4.

49 Sharaf al-Din 'Ali Yazdi, *Manzum*, 41–42.

50 Murtazavi, *Masa'il*, 574–86; cf. E. Blochet, *Catalogue des manuscrits persans de la Bibliothèque Nationale*, III, 266.

51 S.M. Grupper, "A Barulas family narrative in the Yuan Shih", 59. On the *keshig* institution see also Charles Melville, "The *keshig* in Iran: The survival of the royal Mongol household", and Maria E. Subtelny, *Timurids in transition*, 18–24.

of denigration of the new protagonist of Asian history. For instance, in the Anatolian context, the model of the *Shahnama* was used as a moral reference to a mythic past. While 'Aziz of Astarabad completely dispenses with this model, 'Ashiqpashazada in a subsequent period introduced into his chronicle the figure of Rostam as a paradigm for the Ottoman *ghazis*, and various references appeared later in other chronicles.⁵² The pragmatic use of the *Shahnama* on the part of the Timurids represented a sort of model for later sources. In fact, in his chronicle devoted to Mehmed II, Tursun Beg employs the same quotations as the Timurid sources—the use of which he explicitly declares in his text, giving also a reference for his own name to the Firdausian hero Tur.⁵³

A more complex issue is the use of the *Shahnama* in later Timurid sources. An interesting example is the work of 'Abd-Allah Hatifi at the end of the 15th century—which could be useful as a way to summarise our discussion of the use of the *Shahnama* in the Timurid period. Hatifi was a nephew of Jami. As reported by Sam Mirza, in his early age he was introduced to the Timurid literary world through a test of his poetic ability—a *javab* to some verses of Firdausi.⁵⁴ In 1492 he was appointed (presumably by Badi' al-Zaman Mirza) to write a *Shahnama* devoted to Timur, in which he introduced a long *sabab* (reason) for his composition, declaring his desire to “continue” the work of Firdausi, using the same literary magic nature of creativeness (*tab'-i jadufarib*).⁵⁵ He also declared that he wanted to be honoured with the same treatment received by Firdausi on the part of the lord of his time. Nevertheless, after this digression, Hatifi revealed his real models—especially Nizami and Amir Khusrau, whom he was accused of imitating by his contemporaries.⁵⁶

'Abd-Allah Hatifi's main model for his *Timurnama* is the *Iskandarnama*—and he introduces his poem in the frame of a *Khamsa* that clearly draws inspiration from both works by his predecessors. After a first mention, Firdausi disappears from 'Abd-Allah Hatifi's epic. As I remarked elsewhere, when I attempted to find a documented connection between Hatifi and Firdausi, in

52 Âşık Paşazade, *Osmanoğulları Tarihi*, 84.

53 Tursun Bey, *Târîh-i Ebül-Feth*, 125.

54 Frequently mentioned in the *tadhkiras*, the episode is equally mentioned by the literary histories of Persian: E.E. Bertel's, *Navoi*, 33–34; E.G. Browne, *A Literary history of Persia*, IV, 227–29; Muhammad Ja'far Mahjub, *Sabk-i Khurasani dar shi'r-i Farsi*, 124–25, and others.

55 'Abd-Allah Hatifi, *Timurnama*, ed. Abu Hashim Sayyid Yusha'. See Michele Bernardini, “Il Timurnāme di Hātefi e lo Šāhnāme-ye Esmā'il di Qāsemī (Il Ms. Frazer 87 della Bodleian Library di Oxford)”, 97–118. On Hatifi see also idem, “Hātifi's Timurnāma and Qāsimi's Šāhnāma-yi Ismā'il: Considerations towards a double critical edition”, 3–18.

56 See the vehement observations against anonymous authors, probably Hilali, in his *Haft manzar*, cf. M. Bernardini, *I sette scenari*, 20, 118–19, and K. Ayni, *Badriddin Khiloli*, 76.

such a provincial context it could be useful to compare his biography with that of Ibn Husam—an author who, in his *Khavaran-nama*, was largely influenced by his illustrious predecessor. Even though Hatifi never mentions Ibn Husam, they share several features—with regard to which the imitation of Firdausi played an important role. As shown by Giovanna Calasso, Ibn Husam explicitly used Firdausi as a model: one could assert that Hatifi did the same during his lifetime.⁵⁷

Moreover, it is interesting here to remark that both attempted to abridge and “translate” the classical tradition into a more suitable popular language. If one retraces Ibn Husam’s sources in Arabic *maghazi* literature, in Hatifi one discerns substantial, albeit inexplicit references to the popular and oral traditions of his milieu—the same that will later resurface in the Safavid and Uzbek traditions about Timur.⁵⁸ Hatifi introduces the *noyan* Qarachar Barlas in a synthetic way and summarizes all the legends about Timur’s youth from Sharaf al-Din ‘Ali’s text. He mentions several heroes of the *Shahnama* as perfunctorily as in the case of the Timurid sources. In other words, he continues the fundamentally awkward attitude of his Timurid predecessors to confront this *monstre sacré* of Persian literature.

Taking into consideration the pages devoted to Firdausi by Daulatshah—who expends a large number of words attempting to demonstrate the impossibility of imitating the *Shahnama*⁵⁹—we can continue to experience a sort of discomfort in tackling this subject. In fact, the impression is that the *Shahnama* was regarded as substantially obsolete at a time when political propaganda played a major role in the choices of authors and their patrons. It might be interesting to remark that, next to Yazdi’s *Zafarnama*, Hatifi’s *Timurnama* attained great success in Iran, India, the Ottoman Empire and Central Asia. This probably occurred also because of the substantial simplification undergone by the main themes of the *Shahnama*—generally reduced to heraldic insertions in the chronicles of the time.

57 Bernardini, “Il Timurnāme di Hātefī”, quoting Giovanna Calasso, “Un’epopea musulmana’ di epoca timuride: il Xavār-nāme di Ebn Ḥosām”, and eadem, “Una testimonianza letteraria della “provincia” timuride: il Khāvar-nāme di Ebn Ḥosām”, 133–47. [See also the chapter by Raya Shani in this volume, ed.]

58 Maria Szuppe, “L’evolution de l’image de Timour et des Timourides dans l’historiographie safavide, XVI^e–XVIII^e siècles”, 313–31. For the Uzbek legends on Timur see Ron Sela, *The legendary biographies of Tamerlane*.

59 *Dar in pansad sal-i guzashta az sha’iran va fasihan-i ruzgar hich afarida’i ra yara-yi javab-i Shahnama nabuda* [...] “During the last five hundred years not one poet or eloquent one, nor any creature with knowledge, made an answer to the *Shahnama*”, Daulatshah Samarqandi, *Tadhkirat al-shu’ara*, 57.

Moreover, we should mention here Baysunghur Mirza's 833/1430 edition of the *Shahnama*, which represented a "fresh" innovation, but as Khaleghi-Motlagh stated in his article on this subject, the purpose of this new edition "was to modernize the language of the text and to add verses to it". He added that "The introduction is likewise full of accretions about the epic and its author in which even known historical figures are misidentified."⁶⁰ The use of the Baysunghuri text also for modern editions could be representative of a trend that began in the Timurid period: simplification and reduction (or accretion) could have political and propagandistic implications. The price for that is the loss of the historical value of the text, together with its meaning; the advantage is the continuing use of the epic in the celebration of new generations of rulers, who were at least interested in its elegant style, if not in the high moral potential of the archetype.

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60 Djalal Khaleghi-Motlagh, "Bāysongori Šāh-nāma", 9.

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The *Sulaiman-nama* (*Süleyman-name*) as an Historical Source

Fatma Sinem Eryılmaz

Introduction

The principal aim of this study is to discuss the potential of the *Sulaiman-nama*, a work well-known in name but not studied comprehensively or in depth, as an historical source for the reign of Sultan Süleyman (r. 1520–1566). As such, I aim to cast aside the prejudice caused both by its sophisticated literary language and the general designation of the work as a panegyric, and display some of the ways in which *shehnameci* ‘Arif’s *Sulaiman-nama* could be of significant use for researching cultural and political history.

The name *Sulaiman-nama*, or in its Turkish version *Süleyman-name*, is a title shared by many works that describe the events of Sultan Süleyman’s reign.¹ These works with a thematic similarity were in fact written by authors of varying levels of refinement, some in Turkish and some in Persian, some in verse and others in prose, and are now scattered all over the libraries in and outside Turkey. Alongside these less ambitious works, the official version of the events of the sultan’s reign between 1520, the year of his ascension to the throne, and 1555, is recorded by Fethullah Çelebi (‘Arif) in a lavishly prepared book composed in an elegant Persian verse.²

‘Arif’s *Sulaiman-nama* is the fifth and last volume of a world history project that formally followed the model of Firdausi’s *Shahnama* and exploited its cultural legacy. Indeed, by calling his work “*Shahnama-yi Al-i ‘Osman*”, ‘Arif himself states his model overtly. The formal resemblance of the Ottoman work to the Persian classic is clear: ‘Arif’s work is also composed in Persian, in the *masnavi* form and the *mutaqarib* metre like Firdausi’s. Its writer was the first *shehnameci* (*shehname* narrator or *shehnameguy*) of Sultan Süleyman.

¹ “*Sulaiman-nama*” is preferred over “*Süleyman-name*” as the work studied was written in Persian and not in Turkish. On the other hand, the name of the sultan is spelled as “*Süleyman*”. The letters “ç,ı.ü.ş” are used in Turkish proper names. “Sh” is preferred over “ş” unless it appears in a proper name or in a published source.

² This manuscript (H. 1517) is currently preserved in the Topkapı Palace library [TSMK].

Descriptions of Ottoman military expeditions occupy a large section of the textual and visual narrative of the *Sulaiman-nama*. These descriptions also enable 'Arif and his team of artists to manipulate the literary and visual *topoi* of Firdausi's *Shahnama*, including textual and visual references to hero-identifying traits. The epithets and distinguishing adjectives of the heroes and their postures in the visual representative tradition of hunting and combat scenes in the *Shahnama* are used in order to praise the army, its commanders, and especially its ultimate commander, the extraordinary Sultan Süleyman.

However, the *Sulaiman-nama* is not a mere chronicle of military history. In its 617 folios and 69 illustrated pages, it also records Ottoman ceremonies, and provides a detailed account of the state structure as it was in effect in the 1550s. Before beginning the narration of the events of Sultan Süleyman's reign, 'Arif lays out the detailed administrative regulations that the sultan is known to have issued.³ To this end, he provides a noticeably comprehensive list of the ranks, responsibilities, and salaries of the military and bureaucratic personnel. This section constitutes 49 pages between folios 26r and 50r—about 8 percent of the whole text—and includes the depiction of the recruitment of tribute children on folio 31v and the double folio representation of the Divan in session on folios 37v–38r. As such, the tedious explications of the administrative and military structure of the state distance the book from other histories of Süleyman's time.

The careful narration of the ceremonial and the attention given to the textual and pictorial representation of the state structure reflect the desire of the court to register their contemporaneous model of state and the court as an ideal for emulation for future generations of the palace. Ironically, it reveals both the confidence of the court in the perfection attained at the period and hints at a certain fear that their model is vulnerable to degeneration. Once the Süleymanic model is calcified in letters, so to speak, it also becomes a self-conscious reference of perfection and hence, sets its own mythologizing process.

3 In modern academic literature, these regulations are often referred to as part of Süleyman's "law code". In the *Sulaiman-nama* they are often referred to as "qanun", a word generally translated as "law". However, to avoid confusion with the modern sense of law, it would be better to think of and translate them as "regulations". I thank Snjezana Buzov for helping me clarify this point.

The *Sulaiman-nama*: Literature or History?

It might first come as a surprise that this highly prestigious work prepared for the most renowned of the Ottoman royal patrons has not been adequately exploited in academic literature. 'Arif's work has been esteemed as having high aesthetic value on account of its display of the arts of the book, but deserving very little attention as an historical source.⁴ The literary pretensions of its ambitious composer, who openly vied with Firdausi's masterly usage of Persian, have not made the text easy to tackle for many researchers of Ottoman history.

In the entry on the *shehnameci* that is simultaneously appreciative and subtly critical, Aşık Çelebi reveals 'Arif's literary ambitions and self-appreciation, as well as his need for the approval of the biographer. We read that in one social encounter with the biographer, 'Arif compared himself to Firdausi and that he intended to imitate the purity of Firdausi's Persian. Like the great Persian poet who was praised for not having used Arabic vocabulary in his work, 'Arif claimed that he too had recently composed two thousand verses without a single word from Arabic. Aşık Çelebi then proved him wrong with an example from 'Arif's work. The word chosen was "*raihan*"—i.e. sweet basil. The *shehnameci* first tried to argue that the word *raihan* had already been naturalized and entered Persian common usage. When the biographer proposed the common

4 The miniature paintings of the fourth and fifth volumes of 'Arif's *Shahnama* have been published in their entirety and with brief introductions. See Esin Atıl, *Süleymanname: The illustrated history of Süleyman the Magnificent* and Ernst J. Grube, *Islamic paintings from the eleventh to the eighteenth century in the collection of Hans P. Kraus*. Individual paintings from the first, fourth and the fifth volumes have also been published in various art historical studies. I discussed two of the three illustrations on Adam's life in 'Arif's first volume within the context of 16th-century Ottoman artistic and political culture in "From Adam to Süleyman: Visual representations of authority and leadership in 'Arif's *Şāhnāme-yi Āl-i 'Osmān*". A comprehensive examination of the paintings of 'Arif's *Shahnama* is still pending. The phenomenon of Ottoman *shehname* writing has been the topic of several general studies: see Christine Woodhead, "An experiment in official historiography: The post of *Şehnameci* in the Ottoman Empire c. 1555–1605", and "Reading Ottoman *Şehnames*: Official historiography in the late sixteenth century". See also Baki Tezcan, "The politics of early modern Ottoman historiography". For a close analysis and a comparative study of the text and miniatures of 'Arif and his works see Fatma Sinem Eryılmaz, *The Shehnamecis of Sultan Süleyman: 'Arif and Eflatun and their dynastic project*. For the patronage of illustrated books in the Ottoman court in the 16th century, see Emine Fetvacı, *Picturing history at the Ottoman court*.

Persian equivalent of the word ("*sipargham*") in its stead, however, 'Arif yielded his position.⁵

'Arif's work after all is not a collection of historically significant data but a sophisticated literary product of 16th-century Ottoman court culture. Befitting the prestige of his assignment, the reader often encounters 'Arif flaunting his skill by upholding the same metaphoric frame at length, conjuring up mental images that are at times humorous and at times gory. These artistic games make the text more interesting as a literary artefact. They add to it further texture and hence provide more insight into the literary and social culture of 'Arif's times. At the same time, for the less literary-minded, they can be perceived as hurdles obstructing the path to the text's "meaning".

'Arif's style was in part the result of his particular wide interests, self-appreciation, literary aspirations, and his sense of humour.⁶ It was also conditioned by the parameters of the courtly literary language, where complexity and wealth of imagery were highly esteemed. Unfortunately, his style put his work at risk of falling into the crack between literary and political history in the current state of the field of Ottoman studies. The literary complexity of 'Arif's text has been a factor in casting a shadow over its historical value.

Şerafettin Turan, for example, in the second and revised edition of his highly analytical and informative study of the dispute over dynastic succession during the reign of Sultan Süleyman, does not consider one of 'Arif's works, *Vak'a-yi Sultan Bayezid ma'a Selim Han*, appropriate for historical research. This work was composed for the sultan about one year after the Ottoman *Shahname*.⁷ *Vak'a-yi Sultan Bayezid ma'a Selim Han* begins with the appointment of Süleyman's princes to provinces as governors and ends with the defeat of Bayezid, one of the two remaining sons of the sultan, in the battle against his brother Selim in 1559. Hence, it is undoubtedly related to Turan's topic of study.⁸ Even though he implicitly acknowledges its thematic relevance, Turan

5 See the section on 'Arif in the biography of poets of the 16th-century *littérateur* Aşık Çelebi, *Meşār üş-Şu'arā*, f. 166r.

6 See chapter 11 in Eryılmaz, *The Shehnamecis of Sultan Süleyman*.

7 *Vak'a-yi Sultan Bayezid ma'a Selim Han* was also composed in Persian verse and in the *mutaqarib* metre of Firdausi's *Shahname*. It was finished on 2 June 1559 (25 Sha'ban 966). The first volume of 'Arif's *Shahname*, the *Anbiyanama*, was completed on 2 March 1558 (12 Jumada 1, 965) and the fifth volume, *Sulaiman-nama*, in late June/early July 1558 (mid-Ramadan 965). Both *Vak'a-yi Sultan Bayezid ma'a Selim Han* (ms. Revan 1540 mük.) and *Sulaiman-nama* (ms. Hazine 1517) are preserved in the Topkapı Palace manuscript library, whereas *Anbiyanama* is preserved in the collection of the Bruschettini Foundation for Islamic and Asian Art.

8 Indeed, in the introduction of his book, Turan includes the work among those consulted in his research. He refers to 'Arif's work again when he states that it was one of the two sources

writes, “Nevertheless, this work written in an exaggerated and poetic idiom bears no significance for historical research.”⁹

Should we follow Turan’s lead and examine ‘Arif’s *Shahnama-yi Al-i ‘Osman*, like his *Vak’a-yi Sultan Bayezid ma’a Selim Han* solely as a literary output? Does its high-brow idiom reflect a prioritized interest in literary display rather than historical precision on the part of the poet? If so, should we also parallel ‘Arif’s priorities and examine his works not as historical documents but as literary texts?

We should begin to answer these questions first by noting that in the Ottoman court and educated circles of the 16th century, neither writing in such “exaggerated” idiom nor composing histories in verse was an anomaly. Even though the decision to write universal history including a book on Süleyman’s reign using Firdausi’s *Shahnama* as a formal model was not a common choice, it was a particularity within the boundaries of the cultural tradition to which it belonged.¹⁰

Neither was literature defined as so sharply distinct from historical writing. A history written for the sultan, his family and companions was expected to reflect the highest level of achievement in its form. The expectations of a literary output for the palace are comparable to the expectations of formal excellence and accepted innovation from any other artistic product manufactured for the

he consulted that mentioned the sultan’s petition for a *fetwa* to lawfully order the execution of his son Bayezid and his supporters. Şerafettin Turan, *Kanuni Süleyman Dönemi that Kavğaları*, 100–101.

9 Ibid., 16: “Ne ki tümüyle abartılı ve şairce bir anlatımla yazılan yapıt, tarih araştırmaları için bir önem taşımamaktadır.” Translation mine. In her article “History as literature”, 1–55, Julie Meisami offers various examples that deal with the suspicions of historians of the literary devices in historical accounts. The wariness that Meisami exemplifies stems from the disguised introduction of “fictivity” in what is expected to be “factual,” or the literariness in what is supposed to be historical. The dialectic created between the treatment of narrative accounts as literary (fictive) or historical (factual) often results in either the devaluation of the text as an historical account or the neglect of its study as a literary text. In this article, my principle interest concerns the former danger. For the latter, aside from Meisami, who argues that “historical works are not merely records of the past, but literary texts that may be approached through literary analysis” (ibid., 1), see Stephan Leder, “Al-Madâ’ini’s version of *qissat ash-shûrâ*”, 379–98; and especially “Conventions of fictional narration in learned literature”, 34–60. For a learned and highly interesting example of cultural history through literary analysis see Ryan Szpiech, *Conversion and narrative: Reading authority in medieval polemic*.

10 Julie Meisami’s treatment of Persian historiography, especially in matters of style and the relationship between political authority and historical writing, provides useful parallels to similar matters in Ottoman historiography; see her “History as literature”, 1–55.

palace, be it a book cover, a tiled wall, a carpet, or an architectural project such as a royal mosque.¹¹ Sophisticated and metaphorically rich language was part of the etiquette for linguistic self-expression appropriate for Sultan Süleyman's court that could at any point be honoured by the presence of the sultan. The claim of writing an Ottoman *Shahnama* as a literary response to the most prestigious epic in the Islamicate literary tradition could, in fact, only make sense within the context of cultural competition at the highest level.

At the same time, the rich variety of hues and textures manipulated by a skillful writer could allow him to narrate events otherwise unmentionable and share information in a coded language that would be obvious to the members of the Ottoman court of the mid-16th century but hidden from the *uninitiated* contemporaneous commoner. In other words, the complexity of the language can serve as an agile tool for gaining insight into the cultural and political environment of the 16th-century Ottoman court otherwise so distant from the 21st-century researcher. Rather than seeing language as an obstructive outer shell to meaning, it is possible and more constructive to see it as a further aid in deciphering the text's historical content.

A Case Study: The Narration of the Execution of Prince Mustafa in the *Sulaiman-nama*

Once the veil of prejudice against his language is lifted, 'Arif's partial account of Süleyman's reign can indeed offer the reader intimate information relating to incidents that directly involved the members of the court and the dynasty. The sultan's ordering of the death of his first born in 1553 during the prince's visit to his father's tent is an example.

At the time of the incident, the Ottoman army was camping near Ereğli in Central Anatolia on their third military expedition against Safavid Iran. Ottoman military contention with its principal rival in the east, the Safavid Empire, was complicated. When compared with the expeditions against the Christian forces of the Habsburgs or its satellite principalities across the western Ottoman border, justification of war against the Safavids was more problematic, for it was less easy to present fellow Muslims as the enemy.¹²

11 For the rules of artistic and architectural etiquette and standards, see Gülru Necipoğlu, *The age of Sinan: Architectural culture in the Ottoman Empire*.

12 The Kurdish Beg Şeref Han writes that before the army set off on its march to Iran on the very campaign at the beginning of which Mustafa was executed, Sultan Süleyman openly and clearly declared the causes and reasons for the expedition in accordance with the

The fact that the Safavids upheld Shi'ite Islam as opposed to the Sunnism championed by the Ottomans was not a sufficient reason to stir fury among the Ottoman soldiers as many of them sympathized with the Shi'ite conception of Islam. The situation was further complicated as the eastern expeditions required more enthusiasm on the Ottoman side to compensate for the scarcity of water and booty. The difficult mountainous terrain that became even more treacherous in bad weather was another discouraging factor of these expeditions. Furthermore, the irregularities of the terrain often favoured the Safavid forces, who were already more familiar with the geography and used it to their advantage in their hit-and run tactics.¹³

We can observe the symptoms of the physical and psychological strains of the campaigns into Safavid territory in the notable frequency of scandalous incidents that occurred during or immediately after them. Before the execution of Prince Mustafa, the execution of two of the most powerful statesmen of the first long decade of Süleyman's reign, the treasurer Iskender Çelebi during the Persian campaign of 1533 and the Grand Vizier and friend of Sultan Süleyman, Ibrahim, in its immediate aftermath, provoked awe and terror in the Ottoman Empire.

Likewise, Prince Mustafa's execution in 1553 on the way to the third expedition brought the army to the brink of revolt against its chief commander, Sultan Süleyman. The incident also provoked an explosion of literary writing in Ottoman verse, in which the sultan's justice and compassion were openly questioned.¹⁴ In fact, the references in these poems to the sultan's persona and those of his wife Hürrem and his Grand Vizier Rüstem Pasha, who were accused of being the instigators of the incident, often crossed the boundaries of propriety into plain insult.¹⁵ The incident rapidly acquired a taboo status in its

Ottoman manner and custom; Şeref Han, *Şerefname: Kürd Tarihi*, trans. Mehmet Emin Bozarslan, 350. One wonders if the explanation for war was given before each campaign regardless of the identity of the enemy, or customary only on the eastern campaigns against the Muslim neighbours carried on since the time of Süleyman's father, Selim. Şeref Han, for his part, would have had more knowledge of the Ottoman campaigns to the east.

- 13 In his *Tevârih-i Âl-i 'Osmân*, the Ottoman statesman Lütfi Pasha gives a clear description of the guerilla tactics of the Safavid forces in defense. For the Ottoman-Safavid conflict during the reign of Sultan Süleyman, see Adel Allouche, *The Origins and development of the Ottoman-Safavid conflict (906–962/1500–1555)* and Rhoads Murphey, "Suleyman's eastern policy".
- 14 Mustafa Isen notes that with 16 elegies (*marthiya*), Prince Mustafa is the person for whom the most number of elegies were composed in Ottoman literature. Mustafa Isen, *Acıyı bal Eylemek: Türk Edebiyatında Mersiye*, 10.
- 15 For examples of these poems see Isen, *Acıyı bal Eylemek*, 235–323.

aftermath. At the same time, it remained in the public memory of all echelons of society for centuries.

More than a century later, circa 1686, the Ottoman intellectual Hezarfen Hüseyin Efendi in his *Telhisü'l-Beyan* (The Summary Declaration) held the incident responsible for various calamities including dearth and famine, and the conversion of the order of nature into infinite chaos. He added that with the ascension to the throne of Süleyman's son Selim II, the inappropriate change of customs, the turbulence in the hearts of the just and the religious, the competition for superiority of the malevolent, and the misery of those with insufficient provisions had become clearly visible and manifest.¹⁶ Mustafa 'Ali, another Ottoman intellectual, this time writing in the late 16th century, saw the execution of the most deserving heir of the dynasty due to the Grand Vizier Rüstem Pasha's trickery as the beginning of everything negative that the empire was experiencing in his time.¹⁷

There is a curious resemblance between the poem of Kadiri, possibly a soldier-poet about whom we do not have much information, and the assessment of the two intellectuals cited above. Despite his cruder yet more emotional style, Kadiri too speaks of the inversion of order. More interestingly, without the advantage of hindsight that Hezarfen Hüseyin Efendi and Mustafa 'Ali enjoyed, he still blames future misfortunes on the execution of the crown prince. He writes with the warning—or threatening—words of a soothsayer who has already seen the breaking of the Natural Law and expects the worst in the future.¹⁸

16 “... Cumhûr müttelikleridir ki ol zamandan berü mülk-i Rum'un ucuzluğu kaht u galâya ve hilâtin intizâm u ahvâl-i ihtilâl-i bî-intihâya mübeddel oldu. Ne hâl ise ol şehriyârın ahdi güzerân edüp (81a) oğlu Selim Hân cülûsundan berü tegayyur-ı âsâr ve tekeddür-i kulûb-ı ebrâr ve tegallüb-ı eşrâr-ı bed-kirdâr ve tasallut-ı sefele-i kem-mikdâr katı zâhir ve ayân oldu.” Hezarfen Hüseyin Efendi, *Telhisü'l-Beyân fî Kavânîn-i Âl-i Osmân*, 184. The first date Ilgürel suggested for the completion of this work, 1675, has been contested by Tülay Artan, “Royal weddings and the Grand Vezirate: Institutional and symbolic change in the early eighteenth century”, 352. Artan writes that the last date recorded by Hüseyin Efendi as a final note in the section on the *sheyhül'-islams* concerned the dismissal of the Sheyhül'-islam Çatalcalı Ali Efendi on 27 September 1686, and the nomination of Ankaravi Mehmed Emin Efendi in his stead.

17 Jan Schmidt, *Muṣṭafâ 'Âlî's Künhü'l-aḥbâr and its preface according to the Leiden manuscript*, 32, manuscript f. 5v.

18 Isen, 323. Kadiri's words also suggest a latent sense of apocalyptic expectations with the imminent end of an epoch in human history.

Hem cihān aksine döndüğünü andan bilün(!)
 Şol musibetler ki oldı bundan ibret alun(!)
 Dahi neler göresiz devr sonuna kalanun(!)
 Ağlaşun ey halk-ı âlem gitdi Sultan Mustafâ

*And know that is why the world has been rotating in the opposite direction
 The misfortunes that came to pass, take warning from them
 Those that remain till the end of the epoch, you are to see so much more
 Weep together, oh people of the world, Sultan Mustafa has gone*

The language that was used by these writers makes one think that the strong reaction provoked by the execution did not only stem from the despair felt after the unjust death of a prince beloved by the army and the general population. The writers' choice of vocabulary suggests that Sultan Süleyman's order to kill his own son not only deprived the dynasty of its most capable heir, but also signified an unnatural overstepping of order. As such, the sultan's decision was wrong in its essence. Moreover, the incident had consequences stretching further in time. The evaluation of these writers suggest that at least for some, the prince's execution by his father's command jeopardized the future order of the world, as well.

It seems likely that the close association of the execution with the inversion of order is due to the nature of the incident. Fratricide was legalized by the regulations of Sultan Mehmed (r.1444–1446; 1451–1481) when it was deemed necessary for the well-being of the state, and its practice was grudgingly accepted by the subjects of the empire. In contrast, the relationship between the father/sultan and the son/prince was left untouched by law. Religious law and tradition governed the relationship between a father and a son.¹⁹ A father and his son were not near-peers the way siblings were. While respect and obedience were expected from the latter, the father was to show compassion to his son. From what we read in all of the sources outside of the palace, Prince Mustafa

19 In the Qur'an the two parents, mother and father, are generally mentioned together. When there is a differentiation between a mother and father, good treatment towards a mother is prioritized. The child is expected to treat his parents well at all times and obey them as long as they do not ask him to disobey God. See for example the Suras 2:83, 4:36, 17:23, 29:8, 31:14, 31:15, etc. In the hadith tradition, disobedience to parents is considered the worst sin only after disobedience to God. See for example Muhammad al-Bukhari's *al-Adab al-mufrad: A code for everyday living*.

had not broken the rules of this relationship and disobeyed his father.²⁰ Sultan Süleyman's order for the execution of his son, hence, significantly disturbed the norms of familial order at the very heart of the empire, that is in the royal family.

In contrast to the blatantly negative assessment of the incident by authors writing after the reign of Selim II (r. 1566–1574) and by poets composing in fervent reaction to the beloved prince's execution, the contemporaneous Ottoman chronicles barely mention the prince's death and, fearing the sultan's disfavour, do not give further explanation. Consequently, aside from confirming the taboo status the incident had acquired in its immediate aftermath and maintained during the reigns of Sultan Süleyman and Selim II, the silent Ottoman histories are of no use in understanding one of the most important events of Sultan Süleyman's time. Fortunately, it is still possible to trace the probable outline of the incident using the elegies written after the execution, the foreign reports, and 'Arif's *Sulaiman-nama*.

We have already seen an excerpt from an elegy written after Prince Mustafa's death. While they varied in literary sophistication, all of these poems shared the emotional outburst that Kadiri's poem projected. Along with the foreign reports, these elegies help us decipher and compare the information given in the *Sulaiman-nama* pertaining to this taboo execution.

The authors of the reports were foreign agents—either diplomats, merchants, or spies and often engaging in a combination of these activities—who intended to communicate the most accurate and comprehensive information on events occurring in the Ottoman lands as long as they were potentially relevant to their home states in their political and commercial relations. The reports were often meticulously detailed and included eye witness reports for accuracy as well as gossip as an indicator of the public temperament. As could be expected, information concerning the Ottoman sultan, his family, and his close circle was particularly sought after, for it was hoped to provide an insight

20 All the poems written as a reaction to the incident claim the prince's innocence, while the evaluations written after the death of the protagonists portray it as a significant mistake. See Isen, 235–323, Jan Schmidt, *Muṣṭafā 'Alī's Künhü'l-aḥbār*, 32, manuscript f. 5v, Hezarfen Hüseyin Efendi, *Telhîsü'l-Beyân fî Kavânîn-i Âl-i Osmân*, 184. Semiz Ali Pasha reports the incident in very discreet terms in *Menâkıb-ı İbrahim-i Gülşenî*, which was written by Muhyî-yi Gülşenî 16 years after the execution and three years after the sultan's death. In Muhyî's rendering of the incident the sultan is represented as an impotent individual who was easily manipulated by his wife, daughter, and Grand Vizier. Muhyî-yi Gülşenî, *Menâkıb-ı İbrahim-i Gülşenî*, 39–40.

to the psyche of the sultan and his court, as well as revealing their tastes and weaknesses.

Two of the foreign sources that report the Mustafa incident in a most detailed fashion refer to the strangling of the prince with the lasso thrown by the mute executioners. One of them, an anonymous and contemporaneous Venetian source, reports that when the prince advanced from the third to the fourth section in the royal tent to meet with his father, he encountered him with a set bow and arrow in his hands. When he bowed respectfully before his father and greeted him, his father's reply was full of indignation: "Oh, filthy dog, do you still have the courage to greet me?" With these words, the sultan turned his back to his son and thereby, according to the Venetian source, gave the signal for his son's execution. First, one of the royal doorkeepers attempted to strangle him with no success. Then the mute executioners caught him with the lasso they had thrown.²¹

In his *Turkish Letters*, the Austrian ambassador to the Ottoman court, Ogier Ghislain de Busbecq, offers a description similar to the anonymous report.²² He writes that the sultan was following the execution from behind the veil that partitioned his section of the royal tent from where the execution was taking place. When the execution took longer than he expected due to the unyielding struggle of the stout prince, he "directed fierce and threatening glancing upon the mutes, and by menacing gestures sternly rebuked their hesitation."²³ Another Venetian report sent to the city-state in 1554 confirms the presence of Sultan Süleyman in a separated section of the royal tent, observing the incident.²⁴ Aside from these foreign reports, the Ottoman poet Muini also writes about the lasso that leaped forward like a serpent. He damns the one throwing the lasso over the prince wishing that he turns mute, "*lal*," thereby revealing that the executioner was a mute servant.²⁵

Interestingly, 'Arif's *Sulaiman-nama*, which was produced most probably in the royal workshop on the palace grounds, also records the details of the execution on which the contemporaneous historians could not dare to comment.

21 E. Alberi, "Relazione Anonima della Guerra di Persia dell' anno 1553 e di molti altri particolari", 209–10, see Turan, *Kanuni Süleyman Dönemi Taht Kavgaları*, 38–39; Ahmet Atilla Şentürk, *Yahya Beğ'in Şehzâde Mustafa Mersiyesi yahut Kanunî Hicviyesi*, LXII, n. 49.

22 Ogier Ghislain de Busbecq, *The Turkish letters of Ogier Ghislain de Busbecq*, trans. Edward Seymour Forster, 28–32.

23 Ibid., 32.

24 Turan, *Kanuni Süleyman Dönemi Taht Kavgaları*, 38; quoted from *Aviso di Constantinopoli del modo tenuto dalla Roscia Moglie del S. Gran Turcho per far morire Mustafa primogénito suo*.

25 "Kurusin eli kemend atan ana lâl olsun", Isen, 297, 298.

Both in word and image, we encounter a description strikingly similar to the ones in the Venetian and Austrian reports, albeit in a coded language. We read of the lasso referred to as a chord. The involvement of the mute executioners is confirmed alongside a warning that nobody had the right to discuss the execution because no one but the shah knew the truth of the situation. According to the *Sulaiman-nama*, when the prince was in the tent of the shah,²⁶

*His cord of livelihood grew short on him
Was there then in that royal tent
A sin that deserved the rage of the shah?
No one except for the King of Kings of Religion (Şehinşāh-ı Dîn)
Was aware of such a sin*

Slightly earlier in the text, 'Arif's narration suggests that he is referring to the sign language that was used by the mutes who were in service of the sultan in different capacities, including as executioners. In the stich below, the insistent usage of the word for finger, "*angusht*," and the pun on the word "*harf*," which is used both meaning "a letter" and "general talk" invite this association. We read:²⁷

بحرف قضا جای انکشت نیست / که انکشت آن حرف در مشت نیست

*The talk of destined events is not a place in which one should put his finger
For the finger necessary for that word is not in the fist*

With these lines, 'Arif tells his contemporaneous *and* future readers that any discussion concerning the incident is meaningless since no one—but the sultan—has the necessary means to say anything useful or sensible. In fact talking about it could only bring about negative consequences.²⁸

26 The statement that the sultan was the only one aware of the sinning of the prince is a rather crafty interpretation of the matter on two grounds. First, it projects the image of Süleyman as the possessor of privileged information that was not available to others. Espoused with the epithet "The King of Kings of Religion," the reference to the secret knowledge in the text suggests that the sultan was blessed by divinely provided knowledge. Secondly, 'Arif's rendering of the incident absolves others, above all the Grand Vizier Rüstem Pasha, who was possibly 'Arif's main protector in the Ottoman court and was accused of being the mastermind of a complot against the prince.

27 TSMK, H. 1517, f. 571v.

28 Here there might be a reference to the common saying of "putting one's finger in the milk" or "putting one's finger in yoghurt (culture)". Both sayings refer to the interference in others' business often with malicious intentions of spoiling it. It would be useful to check this

Aside from the narration of the incident in verse, 'Arif's team of artists also represented the event visually. However, the related image is not placed in chronological accordance with the text. Instead, the representation of the Prince's prior and, in comparison, eventless visit to his father in 1548 before an earlier Persian campaign includes elements that strongly suggest that the true intention was to depict the visit where the Prince was executed.²⁹ (Fig. 7.1)

In the image, we see the sultan with a bow and arrow in his hand and his torso, in a gesture of rejection, turned away from his son, who has knelt down respectfully before him. This depiction follows in striking closeness the description of the incident in the Venetian report, which further dramatized the encounter by adding the reprimanding words of Sultan Süleyman while holding his bow and arrow. The only difference is the setting: the visit seemingly depicted in the *Sulaiman-nama* takes place in a kiosk rather than in a tent. Still, the partition of the different sections of the royal tent mentioned in Busbecq's account as well as in both of the Venetian reports is paralleled here by the placement of the sultan and his son in two distinct sections of the room. Here we should note that in no other reception scene in 'Arif's book can we see Sultan Süleyman with his head turned away from his guest, or with a bow and arrow, well-known symbols of justice.

In this way, 'Arif's account in his *Sulaimann-nama* confirms the involvement of the mute executioners who threw a lasso and the sultan's presence in a separated part of the same tent. The reason for the sultan's ordering his son's execution is described as a great sin of which only the sultan was aware. In addition, we are told that the scale of the sin justified its fatal punishment, and its nature made it inadvisable to discuss. Such an explication makes it more than likely that it was Prince Mustafa's disobedience to his father in the form of treason—the culmination of a major sin in Islam and the most serious crime against the head of state—that was the sultan's reason behind his son's execution.

This information is certainly not original or more detailed than what we can already read from the descriptions provided in other sources, in this case the foreign reports and the poems written in reaction to the event. However, the Ottoman *Shahnama*'s confirmation of the information on the prince's execution is very significant because it is the only quasi-direct report of the event

possibility of meaning against the history of the saying to confirm its usage in the 16th century. However, this is a task beyond the scope of this project.

29 Esin Atıl, who had sensed the relation of this image with Mustafa's tragic death, noted, "it is as if the sultan has a premonition of the death of Şehzade Mustafa, who sits behind him, trusting and obedient." (Atıl, 196) My position concerning the image is much stronger here, and extends further than the foreshadowing suggested in Atıl's sensitive interpretation.



FIGURE 7.1 *Mustafa with his father Sultan Süleyman, Topkapı Saray Museum Library, Istanbul, H. 1517, fol. 477v.*

on which all the other information we have is from sources that involve two or more people in the chain of transmission. 'Arif's working method of presenting the drafts of his work to the sultan and continuing with the final production only after his approval makes the involvement of the sultan in the *Sulaiman-nama*'s text more direct.³⁰ As a consequence, we can comfortably say that it is the version of the palace that 'Arif voices in the *Sulaiman-nama*, albeit in his own authorial style.

Yet, we might ask ourselves: is 'Arif's proximity to the sultan and his Grand Vizier Rüstem Pasha, who were two of the protagonists of the incident as well as being the patrons of the *shehnameci*, really an advantage? Or does it make

30 For the working method of 'Arif see Eryılmaz, *The Shehnamecis of Sultan Süleyman*, chapter 1.

'Arif's account too partial and therefore, untrustworthy? Like the *Timurnama* of Hatifi and the Safavid *Shahnama* of Qasimi, 'Arif's Ottoman *Shahnama*, too, strongly "bears the traces of the political use of history put into practice", as Michele Bernardini observes in one of his important contributions to the study of Hatifi and Qasimi's works.³¹ In the same essay, Bernardini sympathizes with Jean Aubin's judgment of Hatifi's and Qasimi's dynastic *Shahnamas* written for their Timurid and Safavid patrons as having "limited historical value."³² Should we assess the *Sulaiman-nama* similarly, that is of limited historical value; not just because of its lofty language, but because it is purely panegyric?

Sulaiman-nama as an Historical Source: Document or Text?

According to one of the most prestigious statesmen of Sultan Süleyman's time, Celalzade Mustafa Çelebi (ca. 1490–1567), no writing or verse composition of his time other than 'Arif's *Shahnama* was of "true exactitude" (*sahih al-ʿayar*).³³ In the same breath, Celalzade praises 'Arif's style, comparing his verse to precious pearls and the line and dots of his writing to the elegance of the nymphs in the realm of the sublime Garden of Paradise.

It is clear that for Celalzade, literary form and historical value could exist together. It was in fact preferable that it did so: he himself wrote in the elaborated and artful style of his time on matters of the state and praises 'Arif, who did the same in his universal history. In the same sentence Celalzade also states that the intentions of the rest of the writers of his time are too ambiguous to be trusted.³⁴

Celalzade's comparative assessment of 'Arif's *Shahnama* comes in the introduction of his ambitious project titled *Ṭabaḳātü'l-Memālik ve Derecātü'l-Mesālik* ('Echelons of Ottoman dominions and hierarchy of paths', hereafter referred to as *Ṭabaḳāt*) which was left unfinished upon his death.³⁵ Aside from his high esteem of the *shehnameci*, his words reveal a sharp awareness on his

31 Michele Bernardini. "Hâtifi's *Timûrnâme*h and Qâsimî's *Shâhnâme*-yi *Ismâ'il*: Considerations for a double critical edition", 7–8.

32 Ibid., 7 and Jean Aubin, "Chroniques persanes et relations italiennes. Notes sur les sources narratives du règne de Šâh Esmâ'il 1^{er}", 247–59; esp. 251.

33 Celalzade Mustafa, *Geschichte Sultan Süleymân Ḳânünis von 1520 bis 1557*, f. 10v.

34 Literally, Celalzade says that their lot of ambitions are not seen (or witnessed) in the mirror of reliability. Celalzade Mustafa, f. 10v.

35 For an examination of this work and Celalzade's career in general see Kaya Şahin, *In the service of the Ottoman Empire: Celalzade Mustafa (ca. 1490–1567)*. For an evaluation of *Ṭabaḳāt* within the context of Ottoman historiography see the same author's

part of the multiplicity of contemporaneous accounts on the Ottoman state of affairs and history. It seems that these accounts represented the “truths” in ways that are different from the way he appreciated them and from the way they are narrated in ‘Arif’s work. As such, in the analogy he makes between a written account and a metal alloy, he says that they did not possess the correct—or acceptable—percentage of truth in their composition.³⁶

His introductory remarks also reflect Celalzade’s unease at this multiplicity. His confidence in ‘Arif is defined against his mistrust of the rest of the writers whose motives for writing were not clear to him. Celalzade was the most senior member of the sultan’s ruling elite during most of Süleyman’s reign, and it is obvious that he considered the *Shahnama* writer in his team, so-to-speak, unlike the other writers.

Like Celalzade, who held the office of the Chancellor for 23 years between 1534 and 1557, ‘Arif also worked for the Ottoman state and aimed to glorify its ruler, Sultan Süleyman.³⁷ It is apparent that for Celalzade, the truth value of a text depended on its writer’s intentions, which needed to be plainly observable by the reader. The fact that the Ottoman *Shahnama* was the result of an assignment to compose a laudatory work for the Ottoman sultan Süleyman confirmed that ‘Arif had the correct intentions and deserved Celalzade’s confidence.

Do we, however, with respect to our own criteria of “objectivity” and “perspective”, find the report of the sultan’s *shehnameci* trustworthy? Could the volume on Sultan Süleyman’s reign that is written on his order to glorify him offer the researcher reliable material to work with? Can we, in other words, use ‘Arif’s *Shahnama* and especially its last volume, the *Sulaiman-nama*, not merely as an interesting text but also as an historical document?

“Thucydides is not a colleague”, said Nicole Loraux more than thirty years ago, and with her article of the same title changed the orientation of ancient historical studies almost single-handedly. For Loraux, Thucydides’ History was “not a document in the modern sense of the word, but rather a text, an ancient

“Imperialism, bureaucratic consciousness and the historian’s craft: A reading of Celälzâde Muştafâ’s *Ṭabaḳât ül-Memâlik*”.

36 This metaphor is made by the term “*sahih al-‘ayar*”, translated as “true exactitude” previously.

37 The first reference to ‘Arif on the palace payroll dates to 31 October 1545. Cornell H. Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and intellectual in the Ottoman Empire, the historian Mustafa Âli*, 30, n. 46. The final drafts of the existing three volumes of his *Shahnama* all date from 1558 while his *Vak’a-yi Sultan Bayezid ma’a Selim Han* was completed on 2 June 1559.

text, which is first of all a discourse situated within the domain of rhetoric.”³⁸ In this way, she forcefully reminded the historians of ancient texts that we cannot evaluate them with our own modern categories, disregarding the context in and the conventions with which they were produced. Writing not in Ancient Greece but in the pre-modern world, is ‘Arif our colleague? Is ‘Arif’s *Shahnama* a text or a document?

Let us start by replying the first question: No, ‘Arif is not our colleague. Neither is Celalzade for that matter. I have already argued that ‘Arif’s artful and at times abstruse language does not diminish the historical usefulness of his work. It merely reflects the generic convention of the literary culture in which he was educated, living, and working. As we have seen in the example of Prince Mustafa’s execution, the complexity of the language was even used to communicate information that had acquired taboo status.

‘Arif’s proximity to and dependent relationship with the protagonist of his work, that is Sultan Süleyman, while it would be a serious obstacle for a modern historian, does not make the work of a past historian less interesting for modern historical research. In fact and ironically, it is the overtly subjective and eulogist position of ‘Arif’s work that makes it a particularly reliable historical source. Compared with any other source of Süleyman’s reign, the “biased” character of ‘Arif’s *Shahnama*, and hence its final volume the *Sulaiman-nama*, is not assumed but given from the beginning. There is no pretence; ‘Arif as the *shehnameci* of Sultan Süleyman was always on the side of his patron and sultan.

More significantly, ‘Arif’s narrative—especially in the *Sulaiman-nama* but also in the other volumes of his *Shahnama*—was not only one that was *approved* by the sultan, but it was also what he and his close circle in the court, including individuals like Celalzade and Rüstem Pasha, *wanted to project* to their contemporaneous and future readers as the essential truth. As such, the first Ottoman *shehnameci* ‘Arif’s narrative is particularly valuable as it came directly from the very centre of Ottoman power roughly between the years 1545–1560. In this respect, his output provides a privileged insight to the mentality of the centre of power constituted by the sultan and the core of his court. It reveals their priorities and evokes their fears. It offers a unique opportunity to evaluate the style and the parameters of Ottoman dynastic self-presentation and to observe what was considered necessary to register on paper and forward to dynastic memory and how this was appropriately done.³⁹

38 Nicole Loraux, “Thucydide n’est pas un collègue”.

39 We have to acknowledge that reading ‘Arif’s work—or any other work produced for the palace for that matter—as a singular reflection of the culture of Sultan Süleyman’s court

In his *History and memory*, Jacques Le Goff takes Loraux's critique further and writes that "every document is a monument or a text, and it is never "pure," that is, never purely objective."⁴⁰ In this way, while he agrees with Loraux's critical stance and shares her sensitivity for the context in which the "ancient text" was produced, by extending her critique, he undermines her distinction between a text and a document. I would like to undermine the distinction from the other end by saying that every text is a document. That is, every text is a potential document revealing the mentality of its writer and the parameters of his cultural environment.

As such, the main difference between a narrative document and an archival one is the uniqueness of the former. As a cultural artefact, the narrative is one of its kind and unrepeatable. While an archival document also has to conform to an ideologically conditioned format and hence is never *completely* objective, either, its limits of subjective expression are drawn tighter. Whereas in the tax register or population census authorship is repressed, in a poem or a history it is claimed at times even vaingloriously. Subjectivity is the proud nature of the narrative and it is this lack of objectivity, and the abundance of "impurity" if you will, that potentially adds value to it as an historical document.

A text like 'Arif's *Sulaiman-nama* becomes a document for historical research when we take it on its own terms, taking into account all its partiality and letting its visual and textual language construct its own narrative. In the case of 'Arif's *Shahnama*, like its inspirational model Firdausi's *Shahnama*, though in a lesser degree, the narrative involves myth alongside history.

Myth or History: Jamshid's Cup in Süleyman's Court

In the *Sulaiman-nama* one of the most intriguing images is the representation of Sultan Süleyman sitting in the princely position on a raised throne holding a reddish, shallow, delicate-looking cup. The cup seems to be filled with

would run the risk of characterizing it as an artefact reflective of a homogeneous courtly environment. The members as well as the intellectual trends of the court naturally shifted in time. In addition, the preferences and opinions of the same individual are prone to change during his life time due to personal and circumstantial reasons. Nevertheless and with caution, we can say that 'Arif's *Shahnama* projected one of the most dominant world visions cultivated in the Ottoman court of the 1550s.

40 Jacques Le Goff, *History and memory*, 112.

a dark red wine “associated with Perso-Turkic princely traditions.”⁴¹ (Fig. 7.2) The sultan appears to be raising the cup towards his four viziers who are all standing with their hands clutched in front of them in a respectful position and in ceremonial attire.

The scene represents a ceremony at the court held for the reception of the Cup of Jamshid, which was presented to the sultan by Iskender Pasha on the eve of the Nahçevan campaign against Safavid Iran. This is the same military expedition at the beginning of which Sultan Süleyman ordered his oldest son's execution.⁴²

The image is organized in three vertical sections not equal in size. The widths of the sections appear to follow the hierarchical order based on the importance of the figures they host. The section in the centre where the sultan alone is placed is the widest. In size it is followed by the section on the viewer's left where the viziers are placed with Iskender Pasha standing closest to the sultan. The sections on both sides also host two palace servants and an individually placed figure at the bottom: a gardener in the section on the left and a doorkeeper on the right. As always in similar court scenes in the *Sulaiman-nama*, here too all the figures are grouped together according to their ranks and positions in the ideal Ottoman world order they represent.

From the text, we learn that the cup was as old as humanity itself. Adam had seen it in the Garden of Paradise and Kayumars had adorned his throne with it.⁴³ After Jamshid, Zahhak usurped it until Faridun took it from him. Iraj was the next to hold it followed by Salm and Tur. It was Manuchihr who then received his—kingly—lustre (*tab*) from the clear glow (*raushan*) of its crystal. He was followed by Kavus and Tus. Finally it was Kay Khusrav who made it into a World-showing (*giti numā*) cup and placed it firmly on his throne. Alexander the Great and Anushirvan are also listed in this lineage of mythic/historic kings, all of whom are also heroes of Firdausi's *Shahnama*.⁴⁴

As 'Arif elaborates on the royal Iranian lineage of great kings, the cup becomes an emblematic part of the paraphernalia of kingship. Its brightness is likened to the sun (both as *khurshid* and as *aftab*), and its light is associated

41 Persis Berlekamp, *Wonder, image, & cosmos in medieval Islam*, 93. For a masterly treatment of textual and visual semantics of colour related to the cup of Jamshid/Solomon, see Berlekamp, 93–97.

42 Atil, 215, mentions Iskender Pasha's seizing the cup in the Georgian castle of Ardanuchi and the diplomatic correspondence with Shah Tahmasb, who finally yields his claim to the cup. For more details on the story of the cup see H. 1517, 542b–557b.

43 TSMK, H. 1517, f. 556v.

44 TSMK, H. 1517, ff. 542r, 542v.



FIGURE 7.2 *Sultan Süleyman with the cup of Jamshid, Topkapı Sarayı Museum Library, Istanbul, H. 1517, fol. 557r.*

with the divine light of kingly fortune (*farr*). The passing of the cup from one king to the next while always retaining its lustre and power demonstrates the eternal nature of the cup—and of the concept of kingship that it symbolizes—as opposed to the vulnerable mortality even of the greatest kings.

While its enchanting quality creates awe in all of its beholders, each king makes use of it according to his own capacities. We read that it became a sign of Manuchihr's kingly lustre, a trophy between Jamshid, Zahhak, and later Faridun, an object of envy for Salm and Tur, and a mirror-like vessel that showed the world for Kay Khusrau. We learn that Hippocrates told his shah about the condition of the stars, using it as an astrolabe.⁴⁵ Its usage as a mirror showing realities unrevealed to the naked eye links it to the idea of sacred/secret knowledge that God shared with Adam and through him with a selected lineage of humanity.⁴⁶

What happened to this cup is a mystery. In fact, even its temporary appearance in the court of Sultan Süleyman is not attested by any other source but 'Arif's *Shahnama*. Whether there was such a cup which was thought to be the Cup of Jamshid, found and presented to Sultan Süleyman by one conveniently named Iskender (Alexander) and then lost enigmatically or not, by writing about it and representing it with an image, the *Sulaiman-nama* "materializes a myth."⁴⁷ From the point of view of historical research, this effort to materialize a myth in text and image is at least as interesting, and perhaps even more intriguing, than finding out if the story of the Cup in the court was true.

Conclusion: Materializing the Myth

The idea of materializing a myth was not original to Sultan Süleyman's reign. In her *Wonder, image and cosmos in medieval Islam*, Persis Berlekamp shows how a cup known as the "Cup of Khusraw" "generates in the modern world an oddly familiar type of discourse."⁴⁸ The discourse to which she refers pertains to the "elusive power of the world-showing cup."⁴⁹ We should add that here, in

45 TSMK, H. 1517, f. 556v.

46 For a discussion of the symbols of authority of the prophet-kings in *Anbiyanama*, the first volume of 'Arif's *Shahnama-yi 'Osman* and their relationship to the image of Sultan Süleyman, see Sinem Eryılmaz, "From Adam to Süleyman".

47 I borrow this terminology from an article by Cornell H. Fleischer, "Of gender and servitude, ca. 1520: Two petitions of the Kul Kizi of Bergama to Sultan Süleyman", 149.

48 Berlekamp, *Wonder, image, & cosmos in medieval Islam*, 95.

49 Ibid.

the pre-modern Ottoman context where we see a similar cup, its elusive power is directly associated with the contemporaneous sultan. In this framework and through the rhetoric—and possibly the physical—medium of the cup, Sultan Süleyman became the rightful heir to the mythic Iranian kings while simultaneously drawing a magical power from the mythic legacy of the cup.

Once again it would be worthwhile to remind ourselves that neither Thucydides nor 'Arif is a colleague, and that they belong to a cultural world that differed from ours in many aspects. To understand this cultural world, where myth and reality were not irreconcilable opposites and rather than undermining one another, they could be used in collaboration to construct a different type of "truth", it would be useful to look at a different attempt at materializing the myth.

About forty years before the narration of the story of the Cup in the *Sulaiman-nama*, Sultan Süleyman's father, Selim, ordered a "servant girl" (*kul kızı*) to travel from one town to another with goods worth 1000 aspers. "Would anyone stop her, interfere with her, and molest her? Let us see how things are," Sultan Selim reportedly thought aloud.⁵⁰ Needless to say, the woman suffered many physical injuries and lost the money entrusted to her during the several journeys she took to satisfy her sultan's whim of materializing the myth of an idealized peace in his realm. In fact, it is because of her petitions to Sultan Süleyman for compensation that we know of her case.

In his essay on this curious archival finding concerning the unfortunate yet courageous "servant girl", Cornell Fleischer writes that "such a gesture that sought to materialize the mythic seems consonant with the spirit of an age that, in its mystical and militaristic ferment and millenarian expectations and anxieties, looked forward to the imminent realization, on earth, of religious and philosophical dreams."⁵¹

Forty years later, in a grand project of universal history in five volumes, 'Arif attempts to materialize another myth, this time for Sultan Süleyman. In his Ottoman *Shahnama*, he goes beyond the mere borrowing of the bare format of Firdausi's epic and the stereotypical epithets of his heroes. In its stead, 'Arif composes a daring parallel-response, a *nazira*, to the Persian mythic-history by constructing an Ottoman mythic-history in a more Islamic vein than the Persian master did in his classic.

Indeed, the legacy 'Arif and his team of artists wanted to construct and preserve for eternity was one where Sultan Süleyman achieved the status of a prophetic king similar to those whose lives are explained in the first volume of

50 Fleischer, "Of gender and servitude", 145.

51 Ibid., 149.

the same Ottoman *Shahnama* project (*Anbiyanama*).⁵² In fact, maintaining a much deliberated coherency from the first to the last volume in his work, 'Arif openly states in the *Sulaiman-nama* that Sultan Süleyman was the seal of kingship and faith (*shahi va kish*).⁵³

In this framework, while Süleyman is projected as the last manifestation of prophetic kingship, the Cup of Jamshid becomes the symbolic medium through which he inherited Iranian mythic kingship. The reference to the cup as an item entrusted for safekeeping (*amanat*) until it passed to the possession of Sultan Süleyman confirms the rightfulness of this inheritance.⁵⁴ In this way, 'Arif indicates that Süleyman's selected kingship and divine light or *farr* was willed by God—the divine source in the Muslim context—from the beginning of history.

It would not make much sense to argue that in fact the Ottoman sultan Süleyman was *not* selected by God as the last prophet-king. Rather, it would be more worthwhile to understand the political circumstances and the intellectual and cultural environment that made such a vision of the sultan possible. Likewise, it does not further historical research to ignore 'Arif's Ottoman *Shahnama* including naturally its last volume, the *Sulaiman-nama*, as mere panegyric composed to please the sultan's ears.

In fact, it has already been stated that the *Sulaiman-nama*, which included a disproportionate amount of information on the running of the state and the performance of the court, was neither a mere panegyric nor a straightforward history of Sultan Süleyman's reign. The presence of the particular versions of disputed stories such as that of the execution of Prince Mustafa on the one hand, and the information on the state and ceremonial on the other, suggest that 'Arif's book was intended as a document that the palace wanted to pass on to its own future generations both as a memorial and a model for emulation. Hence, it would be more useful to study this multifaceted source to decipher the messages that Sultan Süleyman and the leading members of his court wanted to project through the *shehnameci*'s work in the 1550s, as well as to gain insight into the cultural and political environment that the Ottoman *Shahnama*'s text and its images reflect, not so deliberately but accidentally, as a natural consequence of their production.

52 Sinem Eryılmaz, "From Adam to Süleyman".

53 TSMK, H. 1517, f. 6r.

54 TSMK, H. 1517, f. 557v.

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A Storyteller's *Shahnama*: Meddâh Medhî and His *Şehnâme-i Türkî*

Tülüin Değirmenci

If one were asked which is the most favourite or widely circulated book of eastern literature, Firdausi's *Shahnama* would probably be ranking at the top of the list. This famous work has been translated into Turkish at different times. Besides, illustrated copies of the *Shahnama* were prepared for the courtiers at the Ottoman royal workshop.¹ When we think about the keen interest of the Ottomans in the *Shahnama*, we should consider not only the illustrated Turkish *Shahnamas*, but also illustrated copies of the Persian *Shahnamas*, which were brought to the palace for various reasons. Due to the relative scarcity of the extant Turkish *Shahnamas*, this famous Persian masterpiece *Shahnama* is wrongly believed to have attracted rather little attention within the Ottoman milieu.² However, in Ottoman society, the *Shahnama* was not treated solely as a written work but also as a significant work of oral literary tradition. In fact, some recent studies on Ottoman literature highlighted the oral aspect of Ottoman literary tradition and proved that it was mainly produced and circulated in an oral environment.³ So, in this evaluation one should consider the role of *Shahnama* stories in oral literary culture as well. Its role was so strong that in the course of time the term *shahnama-khwan* (*Shahnama*

1 For information on the extant copies of Turkish *Shahnamas*, see Orhan Şaik Gökyay, "Şehnâme ve Türkçe Tercümeleri", 45–49; Ramazan Şeşen, "Onbeşinci Yüzyılda Türkçe'ye Tercümeler", 911–12. For the information on the iconographies of the illustrated Turkish *Shahnamas* that were produced at the Ottoman royal workshop, see Serpil Bağcı, "From translated word to translated image", 162–76. There are also three recent articles on Ottoman *Shahnamas* in *Shahnama Studies* 11: Jan Schmidt, "The reception of the *Shahnama* among the Ottomans", 121–39; Lâle Uluç, "The *Shahnama* of Firdausi in the lands of Rum", 159–80; Zeren Tanındı, "The illustration of the *Shahnama* and the art of the book in Ottoman Turkey", 141–58.

2 Jan Schmidt, "Fırdevsî'nin Şehnâme'sinin Osmanlılar tarafından alınılanması", 184–97.

3 Mehmet Kalpaklı, "Evliyâ Çelebi Seyahatnâmesi ve Osmanlı Kültürünün Sözelliliği/ İşıtselliği", 85–86; for the texts being read or recited in oral literature, see Tülüin Değirmenci, "Bir kitabı kaç kişi okur? Osmanlı'da Okurlar ve Okuma Biçimleri Üzerine Bazı Gözlemler", 7–43.

reciter/reader) started to be used as a synonym for the word storyteller.⁴ In addition, reading or reciting the *Shahnama* was regarded as the most important indicator of a storyteller's talent.⁵ Besides there were *Shahnamas* written in a "popular", vernacular language recited by the storytellers. For instance, in the preface of his Turkish *Shahnama*, Eyyubî, a historian from the 16th century, talks about the previous translations of the *Shahnama* which could only be interpreted by the elite and claims that his translation would be apprehended also by the "common people."⁶ This version of Eyyubî might have been one of those *naqqal*-type *Shahnamas* recited by the storyteller. Unfortunately no 'popular' illustrated *Shahnama*, i.e. produced outside the palace workshop, is available today—at least not known to me.⁷ However, there is a Turkish *Shahnama* prepared in the palace workshop at the beginning of the 17th century that provides a unique example that blended the stories of the oral *Shahnama* tradition and the art of painting within the Ottoman courtly milieu. This manuscript, called the *Şehnâme-i Türkî*, and its reception at the Ottoman court forms the subject of this article.

Şehnâme-i Türkî is a Turkish verse and prose 'translation' of the *Shahnama* by Meddâh Medhî (Medhî the storyteller)⁸ as two volumes for Sultan Osman II (r. 1618–1622).⁹ The translation was planned as two sets and it was copied by the famous scribe of the period, İbrahim Cevrî. The volumes were illuminated and illustrated at the royal workshop by the court painters. Three extant copies are located in different collections around the world. The manuscripts at the

4 Fuat Köprülü, "Türkler'de Halk Hikâyeciliğine Âit Bâzı Maddeler: Meddahlar", 364; Kumiko Yamamoto, *The oral background of Persian epics*, 58.

5 İsmail Belig, who wrote a book on the celebrities of Bursa, while discussing the lives of storytellers, suggests that memorizing the *Shahnama* was a criterion for deciding a storyteller's talent. For instance, the famous storyteller Kurbânî Alisi from Bursa used to know the entire *Shahnama* by heart; thus he was invited as a witness during *Shahnama* recitations. İsmâil Belig Efendi, *Târîh-i Burûsa*, 531.

6 Eyyubî, *Tercüme-i Şehnâme*, f. 2r–v.

7 Nevertheless, we still see single-page paintings especially in the albums from the 17th century, which depict themes or heroes of the *Shahnama*. See Tülün Değirmenci, "An illustrated Mecmua: The commoner's voice and the iconography of the court in seventeenth-century Ottoman painting", 199.

8 *Meddâh* literally means panegyrist. However, the term was broadened in the course of time and used to denote *kıssa-khwan*/storyteller in Turkish literature. See, Fuat Köprülü, "Türkler'de Halk Hikâyeciliğine Âit Bâzı Maddeleer: Meddahlar", n. 14.

9 In this article "translation" means re-writing rather than *mot à mot* translation.

libraries of Uppsala University and St. Petersburg University are complementary.¹⁰ The incomplete copy that is at the Bibliothèque nationale, Paris, is the first volume of a second set.¹¹ As this volume was left incomplete, it is believed that the second volume was never created. The initial volumes of both sets start with the story of Adam and Eve. The Paris copy is left incomplete at the story of Bizhan and Furud, whilst the lengthier Uppsala version ends with the story of Rustam and Barzu. At the end of the Uppsala version, Medhî thanks God that he has completed the first volume of *Şehnâme-i Türkî* and acknowledges that he will be telling the stories of Rustam, Afrasiyab and Kay Khusrau in the second volume, and also will be praying for Osman II to like his work.¹²

When compared with the Paris copy, the Uppsala and St Petersburg *Şehnâmes* are clearly more meticulously produced as regards the illustration programmes, and features such as ornamentation of the margins and script. Thus, it is believed that this two-volume work was probably produced for Sultan Osman. At the end of the Uppsala copy, the scribe of the work, Cevrî states that it is an honour for him to be given the task of preparing the copy and also that he will try to perform his best to answer the efforts of Osman II, who is also a poet and a supporter of scholars. He also states that the book is illustrated. The statement ends with the completion date of the copy, March-April 1619.¹³ This date shows that Medhî started to write his *Şehnâme-i Türkî* soon after Osman II ascended the throne.

The first volume of the second set, which is at the Bibliothèque nationale, Paris, as explained above, is incomplete. Only five of the anticipated illustrations could be completed and the places that were intended for other paintings were left blank. Likewise the text was not finished either. The story of Rustam and Furud breaks off in mid sentence. Hence, the *hatime* (*khatima*, conclusion) part which exists in the Uppsala version is missing in the Paris copy. So for whom was this incomplete version prepared? The most reasonable answer to this question would be Mustafa Agha (d. 1624), the chief black eunuch of Osman II. According to the information given by Medhî in the introduction

10 Medhî, *Şehnâme-i Türkî*, Uppsala, ms. O. Celsing 1 [hereafter *Şehnâme* I]. For the catalogue information, see C.J. Tornberg, *Codices Arabici, Persici et Turcici Bibliothecae Regiae Universitatis Upsaliensis*, 93; For the St. Petersburg copy, see D. Smirnow, *Manuscripts turcs de l'Institut des Langues Orientales*, 78–87, and F. Abdullaeva, "A Turkish prose version of Firdawsi's Shah-Nama in the manuscript collection of the St. Petersburg State University Library", 50–58.

11 Medhî, *Şehnâme-i Türkî*, Paris BNF, ms. Suppl. Turc 326, ff. 3v–4v (hereafter *Şehnâme* II). For the catalogue information, see. E. Blochet, *Catalogue des manuscrits turcs*, 313–14.

12 *Şehnâme* I, f. 314v.

13 *Şehnâme* I, f. 315r.

of his *Şehnâme-i Türki*, his appointment for writing the Turkish *Shahnama* for Osman II was made via Mustafa Agha. Also, Medhî, in a poem in the Paris copy—a passage I could not see in the Uppsala copy—praises Mustafa Agha and underlines his generosity and support for many royal residents around him.¹⁴

The incompleteness of the Paris copy is another reason to think that the manuscript was prepared for Mustafa Agha. The period Medhî was translating the *Shahnama*, around 1618–1620, was filled with political turmoil. Mustafa Agha, who was supporting Medhî's appointment for this particular task, played an important role in the enthronement of Osman II. A year later, in February–March 1619, Mustafa Agha was exiled to Egypt for an unknown reason.¹⁵ In Rabi' I, 1030/January 1621, ten months after the submission of the first volume of the illustrated *Şehnâme-i Türki* to Osman II, the second volume, which is in St Petersburg, was completed. It might be concluded that although Medhî started on the first two-volume set under Mustafa Agha's patronage, the Paris copy was left incomplete and the second volume could not be finished due to his unexpected exile or another reason.

The composition of a new *Şehnâme* for Osman II with the support of Mustafa Agha, the content of the text and the iconography of the paintings were closely linked to these political problems, and in particular to those related to inheritance. This issue has been discussed in a different article.¹⁶ In this paper my primary aim is to discuss the selection, appointment of a *med-dâh* (storyteller) as a translator and author of a *Shahnama* and the reasons behind such a choice, rather than the political concerns that are reflected in the *Şehnâme-i Türki* copies. Subsequent to that argument, the link between the appointment of Meddâh Medhî for this task and the use of illustrated *Şehnâmes* will be questioned. First, we need to know more about the author.

14 *Şehnâme* II, f. 18r–v.

15 Topçular Kâtibi 'Âbdulkâdir Efendi. *Topçular Kâtibi 'Âbdulkâdir (Kadrî) Efendi Tarihi*, 701; Ahmed Resmî Efendi, *Hâlifetü'l*, f. 77r.

16 Following the death of Ahmed I, a change occurred in the Ottoman inheritance tradition. For the first time, upon the sultan's death, instead of his son, the eldest member of the Ottoman household came to the throne (Mustafa I, who was Ahmed I's brother). Mustafa I ruled as a sultan for just three months, after which, with el-Hac Mustafa Agha's efforts, he was dethroned and Osman II became the new sultan. To see the effects of this problem of inheritance on Medhî's *Şehnâme-i Türki*, see Tülün Değirmenci, "Legitimizing a young Sultan: Medhî's illustrated *Şehnâme-i Türki*'s in European collections", 157–72.

Medhî the Storyteller

The information that helps us to learn most about Meddâh Medhî can be found in the introduction to his *Şehnâme-i Türkî*. According to this, Medhî had been at the Ottoman palace since the reign of Sultan Murad III (r. 1574–1595). He worked as a *tevârîh-hân* (history reader) and *kıssa-perdâz* (storyteller) during the reign of Sultan Murad III. Afterwards he was granted many gifts by Sultan Mehmed III (r. 1595–1603). He wrote eleven books including the *Edîbnâme* written for Mehmed III, *Gürşasbnâme* (The Story of Garshasb), *Şehnâme-i Türkî*, *Süleymânnâme-i kebîr* (The Book of Solomon), Histories of the Seljuks, Samanids and Buveyhids (Buyids), and a *sîyer* book called *Me'âricü'n-nübüvve* (The Prophet's ascension), as well as a *Tevârîh-i Âl-i Osmân* (The history of the Ottoman house), which narrates the events that took place until the reign of Sultan Ahmed I (1603–1617). He presented the latter to the sultan and various gifts were granted to him.¹⁷

So, who was the storyteller writing pieces for the sultans, who had been within the royal milieu since the reign of Murad III? Considering the works that were claimed to have been created by him we would expect to see his name in different sources of the period and the royal records. Unfortunately, this anticipation proves to be wrong. The available sources of the period do not include any information as regards his appointment for the preparation of the *Şehnâme* by Osman II or Mustafa Agha.¹⁸

The real name of the author who was using the penname of Medhî the storyteller comes from his collection of poems, *Dîvân*, which is known by a 17th-century copy in Millet Library in Istanbul (Manzum Eserler 399) and written in 1592–93. According to some couplets of the *Dîvân*, Medhî's real name was Derviş Hasan. The *Dîvân* includes many poems dedicated to the Ottoman sultans from Murad III to Osman II as well as some Ottoman courtiers. The details of some poems give information on the life and career of Medhî. In the poems he talks about his abilities as a storyteller. He also mentions his Sufi mentor, Hâkî Efendi, who was a dervish from Bukhara and arrived in Istanbul during the reign of Mehmed III. Medhî additionally indicates his attachment to the Maulavi and Kalanderi sufi orders at different times in his life.¹⁹

17 *Şehnâme* II, f. 2r–v; *Şehnâme* I, f. 5r.

18 In the biographies of poets, we see numerous bards using the penname Medhî. Nevertheless none of those poets created similar works to that of Meddâh Medhî. Edith Gülçin Ambros, "So many Medhis ...", 25–33.

19 Nezihe Seyhan, "Medhî Divanı", 12–27.

Another piece of information about Meddâh Medhî is included in a book entitled *Kıssa-i nevbâve* (The story of Sultan Mahmud the Ghaznavid) written for Murad III by Derviş Hasan Medhî, the *meddâh* (storyteller) of the sultans. This time he uses both his name and penname together and gives interesting details about himself in the preface to the *Kıssa-i nevbâve*.²⁰ According to this, Medhî, after becoming the storyteller of Murad III, wrote four books and presented them to the sultan. These include *Şîr-i Dilîr ve Mihr-i Münîr* (A love story between Şîr-i Dilîr and Mihr-i Münîr); *Hikâyet-i Ebu Alî Sînâ* (the story of Ibn Sina); *Sehlân bin Sihîr* and a book which includes witty sayings he imagined writing for Sultan Mahmud the Ghaznavid. Upon this, Murad III asked Medhî to write a book including stories that had not been recited by the storytellers of Rum (today's Anatolia) in Turkish previously. In response to this request, Medhî discovered a book that had been translated from Arabic into Persian. The book ('Utbi's *Tarikh-i Yamîni*) tells strange stories of shahs, Sultan Mahmud the Ghaznavid and his predecessor Sebüktegin. He believed Sultan Murad III would like the book.²¹ Regarding this book, Medhî commented later that "there were serious difficulties" and that he had asked for help from a friend to resolve them. His friend agreed to offer help with making the translation, provided that Medhî carried out *kıssa-perdâzlık* (storytelling), as he (the friend) did not know *usul-i kıssa* (the style/way of storytelling), adding that it would be a nice opportunity for them to create a book together and leave it as a memorial. Medhî accepted the offer. His friend made the translation and he performed the 'storytelling'.²²

The information provided in the introduction of *Kıssa-i nevbâve* not only gives significant clues about Medhî, but also includes interesting details regarding the translation process of a book into Turkish and the contribution of a storyteller to the translation that is going to be dealt with in detail in the following pages. If we return to the information available about Meddâh Medhî, we find another interesting detail included in the preface of *Gencîne-i hikmet* (Treasury of wisdom), which includes stories about Ibn Sina's life, written by Seyyid Ziyâeddin Yahya in 1629. Seyyid Ziyâeddin Yahya mentions another book called *Esrâr-ı hikmet* (Secrets of wisdom) by Derviş Hasan Medhî (i.e. Meddâh Medhî). According to the author's interpretation, Derviş Hasan Medhî presented this book to Sultan Murad III, but the sultan did not like it. Later, Ziyâeddin Yahya, who reviewed Medhî's book and learned the relevant

20 Derviş Hasan Medhî, *Kıssa-i nevbâve*, ff. 4r–6r. For the catalogue information, see Charles Rieu, *Catalogue of the Turkish manuscripts in the British Museum*, 42–43.

21 M. Nazım, "Utbi", 83.

22 Derviş Hasan Medhî, *Kıssa-i nevbâve*, ff. 4r–6r.

details about the story of Ibn Sina from *tevârîh-şinâsân* (people who know history) wrote his own book.²³

In an extant copy of *Esrâr-ı hikmet*, Dervîş Hasan Medhî, whilst giving the reasons for writing the book, mentions that he presented his work to Mehmed III.²⁴ Nevertheless, both the information given in Yahya's *Gencîne-i hikmet* and Medhî's statement regarding the completion of the *Esrâr* during 1592–93 suggest that the book was written not during the reign of Mehmed III, as he states, but that of Murad III. Possibly, Medhî wrote the book for Murad III, and when the sultan did not like it, he tried to give it another chance by presenting it to his successor, Mehmed III. This also confirms the words of Seyyid Ziyâeddin Yahya.²⁵ At the beginning of the Ibn Sina story, Medhî gives some information about himself. According to his own words, Medhî, after wandering around for a while, developed a passion for history. In the late chapters of the book, he introduces himself as a *kıssa-perdâz* (storyteller) of Murad III.²⁶

Another book written by Medhî and mentioned in the preface of the *Kıssa-i nevbâve* is *Şîr-i Dilîr bâ-Mihr-i Münîr* (A love story between Şîr-i Dilîr and Mihr-i Münîr), which is known by two extant copies today. In the preface to the story Medhî introduces himself as a *kıssa-perdâz* (storyteller) and *nedîm* (close companion) as in his other works mentioned previously.²⁷ This must have been one of those stories that Medhî performed as a storyteller.

An interesting book that was not revealed as being among other works of Medhî was published lately. The book entitled *Menâkub-ı Dervîş Hâkî* (Legendary life story of Dervîş Hâkî) tells the adventures of Dervîş Hâkî who was also introduced as the Sufî master of Medhî in his *Dîvân*. At the end of *Menâkub*, Medhî recounts the close relationship between Dervîş Hâkî and Sultan Ahmed I and his intermediary role between the sultan and the shaikh.²⁸

Another significant detail about Dervîş Hasan can be seen in a letter that is believed to have been written in 1599–1600 and belongs to the library of the famous Ottomanist Fuat Köprülü. In the letter, the well known storyteller of Murad III, La'îln Kaba is mentioned and his talent as a storyteller is praised.

23 *Gencîne-i hikmet*, ms. Harl 5456, f. 4v. Other copies of the manuscript are in TSMK, R. 1478; Uppsala University Library, ms. no. 118. For information on the book, see Ahmet Ateş, "Türk Halk Hikâyelerinde İbn Sînâ", 33–34.

24 *Esrâr-ı hikmet*, Istanbul University Library, ms. T. 690.

25 Ahmet Ateş "Türk Halk Hikâyelerinde İbn Sînâ", 267–68.

26 *Esrâr-ı hikmet*, f. 3r; Ateş, "Türk Halk Hikâyelerinde", 268.

27 Müjgân Çakır & Hanife Koncu, *XVI. Yüzyıldan Bir Aşk Hikâyesi*, 13–17.

28 Dervîş Hasan Medhî, *Menâkub-ı Dervîş Hâkî*, 28, 40, 77–78.

The same letter reads “So Derviş Hasan will read another story to his beloved friends.”²⁹

Another book that is believed to have been written by Derviş Hasan is the story of Rıdvan Shah. The extant copy of the text was written in the 18th century by a poet who used the penname ‘Medhî’. After a careful review of the book, taking into consideration the language and the style of the text as well as the similarities between certain expressions, Adnan İnce, a Turkish scholar, concluded that it was the same person, Medhî, who wrote the stories of both Ibn Sina and Rıdvan Shah. İnce thinks that both texts bear the characteristics of a storyteller’s work in terms of style and language. He also points to the typographical errors and the inappropriate use of language by Medhî and suggests that he is a representative of vernacular literature.³⁰

Mükrimin Halil Yinanç, a Turkish historian, tells us about another Medhî who lived in the 17th century and re-wrote *Târîh-i Âl-i Selçûk* (The History of Seljukid Dynasty), which had been written by Yazcızâde Ali, a 15th-century Ottoman historian, for Sultan Murad II (r. 1421–1451), with certain additions.³¹ In the light of information provided by Yinanç, Adnan Erzi claims that this might be the same book as the *Muntahab-i Tavârih-i Salâçika*, a book on Seljuk history that is currently kept at the Bibliothèque nationale, Paris.³² Although we do not know for certain that Medhî wrote this book, as stated previously, in the preface of the *Şehnâme-i Türkî*, he mentions a book on the Seljukids among the books that were written by him. Hence, the information provided by Yinanç is quite significant.

With all these bits and pieces of information we are tempted to think that possibly the author who used the penname ‘Medhî’ and wrote “popular” stories and history books at the end of 16th and beginning of the 17th century, and the translator of *Şehnâme-i Türkî* were the same person. Although the language of the Stories of Ibn Sina and Rıdvan Shah is regarded as simple by some modern scholars,³³ I think that Derviş Hasan Medhî was a protean author who was able to write in different styles. His chance to serve four different Ottoman sultans and their different literary tastes might have prompted his

29 Fuat Köprülü, “Türkler’de Halk Hikâyeciliğine Âit Bâzı Maddeler: Meddahlar”, 392; Özdemir Nutku, 23. Köprülü’s private library is a part of Yapı Kredi Sermet Çifter Library collection. Nevertheless the Mecmua could not be traced in the library collection.

30 Adnan İnce, “Medhî’nin Rıdvan Şah Hikâyesi”, 273–77.

31 Mükrimin Halil Yinanç, *Türkiye Tarihi Selçuklular Devri*, 11.

32 BNF, Supp. Turc 1182. There is no information as regards Medhî being the author. Thus the reason for Erzi’s suggestion is not known; see Adnan Sâdık Erzi, “İbn Bibî”, 717.

33 Ateş, “Türk Halk Hikâyelerinde”, 265–75; İnce, “Medhî’nin Rıdvan Şah”, 273–308.

ability. Specifically, the well-known keen interest of Murad III, Mehmed III and Osman II's in storytelling probably created a rich opportunity to Medhî as a storyteller. Presenting each of his works to the sultan also gave him close ties with the court and allowed him to become a member of the royal network.

To sum up, Dervîş Hasan Medhî had been at the palace since the reign of Murad III, and was mostly writing story and history books. He also performed as a storyteller and companion to the sultans. He was appointed to translate the *Shahnama* for Osman II. At this juncture, we cannot help asking the question why was Meddâh Medhî selected for this task? Did this choice have anything to do with the method to be used for the composition of the *Şehnâme-i Türkî*?

Why Medhî the Storyteller?

When we have a look at the works of Meddâh Medhî, we notice that almost all the works he created were re-written forms of already existing texts rather than new compositions. The question is how did Medhî re-write these texts? Regarding this issue, the words in the introduction of *Kıssa-i nevbâve* are quite important. As noted above, Medhî asked a friend, who agreed to help with the translation provided that Medhî did the "storytelling", as he did not know the "style of the story." Probably what was meant here was the deployment of a fluent style which would be suitable for the narration and phrasing of the text. This suggests that Medhî, who was a storyteller, wrote or reinterpreted texts for reading or narration by himself or with another storyteller.

A note at the end of an extant copy of Medhî's Ibn Sina story shows that it was used by storytellers. According to the note, this book was read aloud to an audience at Selim Agha's residence by Dühânî Rüstem-i Zâl. Whether or not it is a coincidence that the reader of the book, Rustam the son of Zal, had the same name as one of the most famous heroes of the *Shahnama*, it is quite possible to think of him as a storyteller like Medhî.³⁴

Reading out loud was among the important leisure activities of the Ottomans. Reader notes in the margins of manuscripts reveal that books of various contents, but mostly those that could be defined as "popular", which were written mainly by or for storytellers, were read aloud to special groups of people that used to gather at coffee houses, shops or residences, especially during the 18th century. For easy reading purposes, most probably, those books were copied with naskh script in a fluent language. Such books were usually leased from a

34 *Esrâr-ı Hikmet*, f. 77r.

bookseller or a bookbinder and were read aloud at different neighbourhoods of Istanbul.³⁵ Medhî's İbn Sina story and the love story of Mihr-i Münîr and Şîr-i Dilîr were among those books. While Medhî was telling the stories himself in his lifetime, his work was used by other storytellers later on.

A similar story was told by another storyteller in detail in the *Hâşîmnâme* (Book of Hashim), the story of one of the sons of Hamza, paternal uncle of the Prophet Muhammad, translated from Persian into Turkish by Hacı Mehmed Tokatî, who was a storyteller, for Sultan Bayezid's son Korkud (d. 1512–13).³⁶ Here translation probably refers to re-writing in the storytelling style, as practised by Medhî. Similarly, in his *tezkiye* (biographical dictionary of the poets), Âşık Çelebi, a 16th-century Ottoman literary historian, mentioned a poet called Âhûr Emîrizâde Hâşimî who was writing stories in the “style of storytellers.”³⁷ According to the introductory chapter, Mehmed Tokatî was reading the translation section by section before the sultan. Since he was scared that his book might be obtained by ignorant people he concealed the text and did not show it to anyone. Nevertheless, the translator, who was of an old age, prepared a copy to leave as a memorial for the coming generations and to his friends who would remember him with gratitude.³⁸ This information gives us several important clues about the dissemination of the stories, also proving that these texts were prepared and read to an audience by the authors themselves. Whilst the readers or storytellers were performing, they were hiding the stories out of concern for competition, but at the same time they were leaving memorials of their works so that they would be remembered during their retirement. Thus, the ‘copyright’ of the stories, in a way, belonged to the person who was compiling or translating them and re-writing them in a new way. Medhî wrote his *Şehnâme-i Türkî* to present to Osman II, just like Hacı Mehmed Tokatî. So did the famous storyteller and boon companion of the period of Murad IV (1623–1640), Tıflî Çelebi (d. 1660). According to Evliya Çelebi, the 17th-century

35 Tülün Değirmenci, “Bir kitabı kaç kişi okur?”, 7–43; “Söz Bir Nesnedir ki, Zâil Olmaz: Osmanlı İstanbul’unda Hamzanâme Geleneğine Göre Kamusal Okuma (Hikâye-Resim-Kitap)”, 634–49.

36 The one and only copy of the manuscript is at John Rylands Library, Manchester (Cat. no. 14). The copy date of the book is not known and according to Jan Schmidt, it carries “simple and archaic” language features. The manuscript is of Italian origin and leather bound, which probably dates back to the end of the 17th century. Jan Schmidt, *A catalogue of the Turkish manuscripts in the John Rylands University Library at Manchester*, 52–53. For the transliteration of the text, see Aylin Koç (ed.), *Hâşîm-nâme, Giriş, Metin, Dizin, Tıpkıbasım*.

37 Cited by Köprülü, “Türkler’de Halk Hikâyeciliğine”, 370. Âşık Çelebi, *Mesâ’irü’s-su’arâ*, I, 532.

38 Koç, *Hâşîm-nâme*, 1–2.

Ottoman traveller and author, when Tiflî Çelebi read the *Shahnama* in the presence of Sultan Murad IV, the shahs (sultans) were becoming *dilşâd* (happy).³⁹

Possibly, like Tiflî Çelebi, Meddâh Medhî was a storyteller telling stories in the presence of the sultans, re-interpreting them and writing them in the storytellers' language. He had been performing this job since the reign of Murad III and his stories were sometimes liked and sometimes they did not receive as much praise as would have expected. When he was appointed to translate the *Shahnama*, which would be illustrated for Sultan Osman II and Mustafa Agha, Medhî was an old man and this offer was probably a serious opportunity for him. Obviously, his appointment for this task was not only because of his translation skills; moreover, as noted above in connection with his writing *Kıssa-i nevbâve*, Medhî's Persian was lacking for such tasks at times. But, his real talent lay in his ability to write using the storytelling style. Maybe Medhî did not translate a written piece, and put into writing what he had already been reciting. Supporting this assumption, Medhî's text also includes various stories that were not in Firdausi's *Shahnama*. For instance, as noted above, Medhî's *Şehnâme-i Türkî* starts with the story of Adam and Eve, which is not present in Firdausi's text. Also the stories that were later added to Firdausi's *Shahnama*, the so-called 'post-*Shahnama* epics' are also found in Medhî's *Şehnâme-i Türkî*. The story of Barzu at the end of the Uppsala copy is one of those stories. According to Karin Rühdanz, these stories were added to the *Shahnama* beginning from the 15th century and the story of Rustam and Barzu was particularly prominent. Rühdanz also suggested that these stories that were developed within the oral tradition, in time became incorporated into the *Shahnama* and that the storytellers had a significant role in this.⁴⁰ Accordingly, Medhî might have been appointed to write down the *Shahnama* stories he had already been reciting for Osman II or members of the Ottoman court circles. Possibly the first illustration of the Paris copy depicts Medhî's performance before the sultan, Osman II (Fig. 8.1).

In the painting, Sultan Osman is sitting on his throne in one of the chambers of Topkapı Palace. The sultan holds a white handkerchief in one hand and a leather-bound book in the other. The black figure, waiting respectfully right across from the Sultan, in front of a barred window opening to the garden, might be Mustafa Agha, who introduced Medhî to the sultan. Behind Mustafa Agha, there is another person with a darker skin, holding prayer beads in one hand and a red leather-bound book in the other. This person was probably

39 Mehmed Fuad Köprülüzâde, "Tiflî Ahmed Çelebi", 234–35.

40 Karin Rühdanz, "About a group of truncated Shahnamas: A case study in the commercial production of illustrated manuscripts in the second part of the sixteenth century", 118–34.

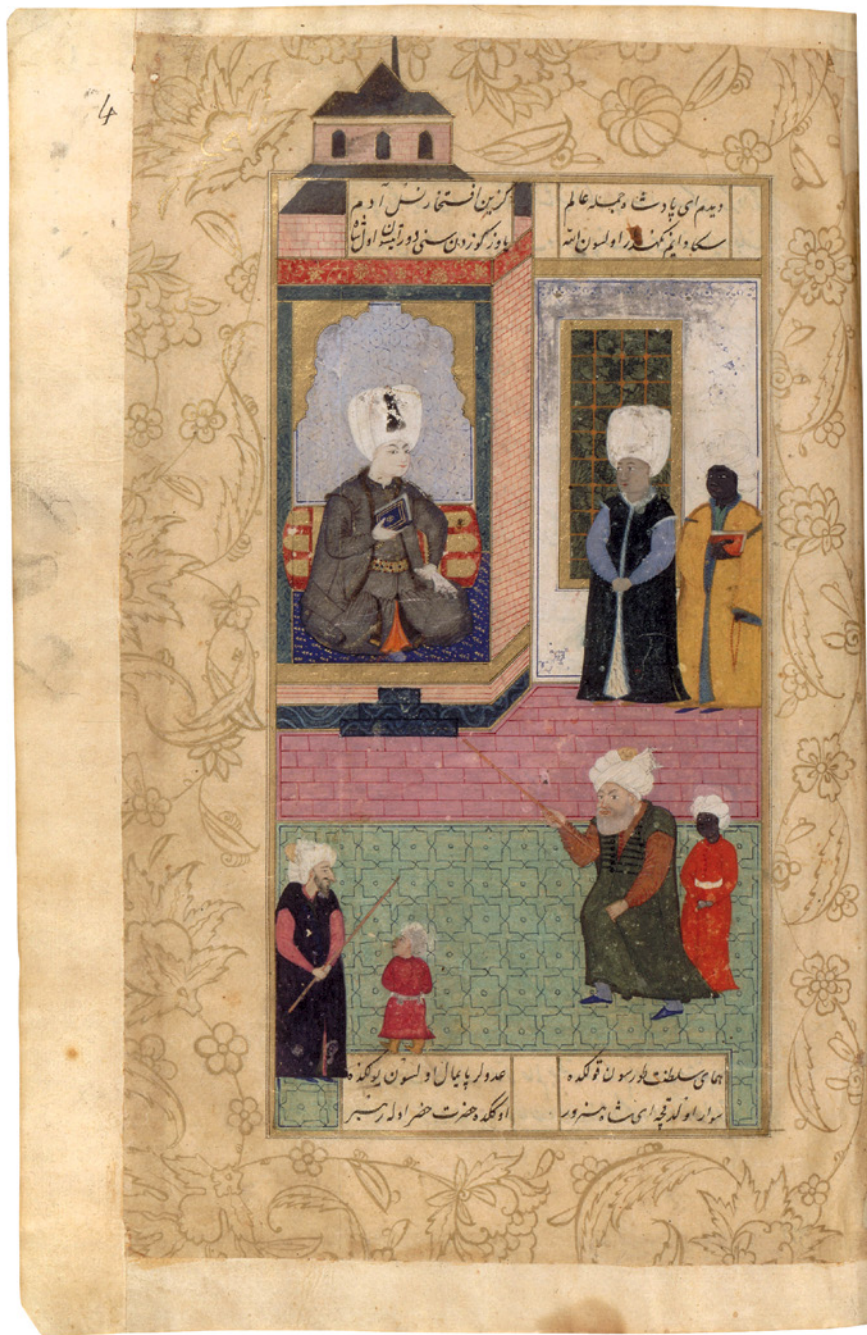


FIGURE 8.1 *Medhi's performance before the sultan, Osman II, Paris ms. Suppl. Turc 326, fol. 3v.*

Mustafa Agha's assistant, who carried Agha's prayer beads, which might be a reference to his Hajj visit to the holy Ka'ba. In front of the scene, two people are depicted with sticks in their hands. The one on the right is an elderly man with a white beard, who points his stick forwards; in his other hand he holds his robe for moving comfortably. Right behind this man, a dark figure with hands folded in front of him waits respectfully. Right across this aged man, there is a relatively young man. He was portrayed in profile and has a strange look as if he is laughing. This image is interesting because, in Ottoman painting, such images that show people's emotions are very rare. This figure with his grey beard also holds a stick in his hand and a dwarf standing in front of him has turned his head towards him.

In the passage accompanying the painting, Medhî's reception before Osman II via Mustafa Agha is recounted as follows: Medhî presents one of the books he had written previously to Sultan Osman II. Upon this, Osman II asks Mustafa Agha about Medhî's situation. The Agha tells the sultan "realistically" with all honesty about Medhî. Then Medhî was invited to the sultan's presence, where he recites a poem praising him and wishing him well. After praising the sultan, he wants to write a piece that the sultan would like and proposes certain works: *Süleymanâme-i kebîr* (The Book of Solomon), *Hamzanâme* (The Book of Hamza) and *Şehnâme-i Firdevsî*. It is significant that all three books proposed by Medhî are the primary stories told by the storytellers. Moreover, in these lines Medhî uses the word *nakl* (*naql*, convey) and this shows that as a storyteller he writes the stories that he tells. This makes us think that he was a storyteller who has entertained the sultans with his witty sayings. Taking into consideration Medhî's words, we can decode the iconography of the accompanying painting as follows:

In the illustration, the book in Osman II's hand should be one of the books previously written by Medhî and presented to the sultan by Mustafa Agha as a sample. At the moment, the sultan may or may not have looked at the other book held by Mustafa Agha's assistant. If he hasn't looked at it yet, he will consider it after checking the one in his hand. The elderly man with white beard standing at the front of the stage should be Meddâh Medhî. As stated in his *Şehnâme-i Türkî*, he had been at the palace since the reign of Murad III and he became quite old while doing this work. The stick in his hand is the most obvious evidence for his being a storyteller as sticks are one of the most significant and peculiar details of a storyteller's paraphernalia.⁴¹ Thus, the scene possibly depicts Medhî when he was reading a poem of praise in the sultan's presence or conveying some stories from the *Shahnama* that he was proposing to write.

41 Özdemiş Nutku, *Meddahlık ve Meddah Hikâyeleri*, 132–33.

Both the body language of Medhî and the stick in his hand suggest that he managed to show his skills during the reception. The other figure standing opposite to Medhî also carries a stick in his hand and thus, we tend to think that he might be another storyteller who responds to Medhî's words.

The iconography of this painting as well as Medhî's identity and the nature of his other works imply that the main reason for his appointment to translate *Shahnama* for Osman II was due to his being a storyteller. To be more precise, Medhî's *Şehnâme-i Türki* was produced to be read or recited in the presence of the sultan by Medhî or other storytellers at the court. Recitation of *Shahnama* stories at the Ottoman palace was not a novelty that was only seen during the reign of Osman II. Still, transforming the *Shahnama* recitations into an illustrated book seems to be an authentic situation which I have not come across before. Obviously Osman II's interest in listening to stories had a profound effect on the matter.

Osman II's interest in listening to stories was explained in the introduction of another book by Hüsameddin Bursevî (d. 1631). According to Bursevî's own words, he came from Bursa to Istanbul, succeeded in appearing before Sultan Osman II and presented two of his books. The sultan liked these books and asked Bursevî to write a new one for him. Since Bursevî knew that Osman II had a mania for stories, he decided to write the *Acaibü'l-mahlûkat* (Wonders of Creation). When these stories were read before the sultan, he would imagine himself in those foreign lands.⁴² Bursevî's words clearly show Osman II's passion for the reciting of stories in his presence. Another story book titled *Tûtînâme* (The Book of Parrot) by Nev'îzâde Atâî, a 17th-century author, was also written for Osman II and this too gives strong clues about the sultan's literary taste.⁴³

Actually, Osman II was not only fascinated with stories, he himself was a protagonist of a story as well. His accession to the throne and his dethronement are both unusual events. His murder by his own soldiers in 1622 was the first clear-cut regicide in Ottoman history. Osman II's tragic end at a very early age has become an attractive subject for modern historiography; this incident also became a popular story widely told by storytellers of the 17th century. Hüseyin bin Sefer, a retired Janissary who used the penname Tûghî, wrote the first account of the incident and it was recited at the coffee houses and the Janissary corps for years.⁴⁴

42 Hüsameddin Bursevî, *Mirâtü'l-kâinât*, ff. iv–2r.

43 Nev'îzâde Atâî, *Tûtînâme*, f. 2r; Cahit Öztelli, "Tûtî-Nâme Üzerine Bilgiler", 3–7.

44 Baki Tezcan "The history of a 'Primary Source': The making of Tûghî's chronicle on the regicide of Osman II", 41–62. For a recent study on the different editions of Tûghî's text, see Şevki Nezihi Aykut, *Hüseyin Tuğî, Müsibetnâme (Tahlil-Metin ve İndeks)*.

Moreover, Osman II was the protagonist of another group of stories known as “Tıflî stories” that are mostly available today as printed copies from the 19th century. They tell about the debauched adventures of young men in Istanbul and by the end of the story we see Osman II or Murad IV as the authority bringing justice. Murad IV’s meddâh, Tıflî, who is believed to be the creator of these stories, is among the characters. According to Pertev Naili Boratav, who was one of the first scholars to interpret these stories, they were probably written versions of the stories told by Tıflî among other storytellers.⁴⁵

Briefly, Osman II’s tragic end and his keen interest in listening to stories probably caused him to become a protagonist of the stories that were recited later on, and his historical role was left aside to a certain extent. Meddâh Medhî’s *Şehnâme-i Türkî* was among the stories that were being recited. We may imagine that while Medhî was reciting the *Shahnama* stories, Osman II was looking at the paintings and so enjoying the stories more vividly. As described by Bursevî, maybe that way, he felt as if he had travelled to foreign distant lands and had seen those far away places. Besides being an Ottoman sultan, Osman II was a young man fond of listening to stories. This is probably why soon after he came to the throne he asked a storyteller to write a Turkish *Şehnâme* for him and had it illustrated rather than asking for another kinds of books.

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45 Pertev Naili Boratav, *Halk Hikâyeleri ve Halk Hikâyeciliği*, 99–100.

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The *Shahnama* Legacy in a Late 15th-Century Illustrated Copy of Ibn Husam's *Khavaran-nama*, the Gulistan Palace Library, Tehran, Ms. 5750

Raya Shani¹

Introduction

The *Khavaran-nama* by Ibn Husam (d. circa 875/1470) is an epic poem in the *mutaqarib* metre, celebrating the heroic deeds of 'Ali b. Abi Talib and his four companions, Sa'd-i Vaqqas, Abu'l-Mihjan, Malik-i Azdar/Ashtar and 'Amr-i Umayya, during their adventurous journey to the far-off lands of Khavaran to eradicate paganism there and replace it by Islam.

The epic takes place in the lands of the allied pagan kings on the steppes of Khavaran² and evolves through a series of battles interspersed with sub-plots of alternating mischief and bravery involving the participants. The main characters among the pagan rulers are the king of *Khavar-zamin*, called Jamshid; the king of *Sahil-zamin*, called Tahmas; and the king of *Qam al-ruqum*, called Salsal, who is also the protector of the City of Gold, the *Shahr-i zarrin*. Although certain events in the *Khavaran-nama* are reminiscent of those known to 'Ali and his four companions during the early battles of Islam, fictional elements have completely overtaken the narratives, embellishing the epic with fantastic fairy-tale motifs describing 'Ali's extraordinary feats of courage against wicked wizards, lions, dragons, and a whole troop of *divs*, *jinn*s, and other mythical creatures living in the lands of Khavaran. 'Ali's supernatural powers are further emphasised by his ability to decode the charms and talismans found at the "Fortress of the Talismans of Dal", a most complicated task but necessary before he is able to enter the City of Gold. "To take this fortress thought is needed, it is full of tricks and magic, it cannot be conquered with the sword and the noose ... whosoever dispels the talismans of this fortress can go into the Golden City."³

1 Special thanks to my editor Charles Melville, who was kind, helpful and inspiring throughout the entire process.

2 On the *dasht-i Khavaran* as a geographical region in east Iran, see Graham, "Abu Sa'id ibn Abi'l-Khayr", 105. Cf. Shani, "Some comments", 243.

3 The translation is taken and rendered into English from Giovanna Calasso, "Un epopea musulmana di epoca timuride", 466, where the author refers to fols. 125r–125v (margin) in a still

Having approached this Fortress of Talismans, at the threshold of the City of Gold, 'Ali learns from an inscription on stone that the Kayanid (i.e. Iranian) king Dal, whose kingdom of goodness and justice was brought to an end by his brother Salsal, had contrived before his death⁴ to plant there powerful magic spells to make the City of Gold inaccessible to ordinary mortals, until, "in another epoch", the Arab hero 'Ali will come and break them and bring back justice to the City of Gold.⁵ As predicted, 'Ali breaks the talismanic codes and enters the City of Gold, where he eventually kills the evil ruler Salsal and converts his righteous widow, Shamama, to Islam. The conquest of the Golden City, then, is the climax of the story representing the triumph of Islam over the lands of Khavaran.⁶ After the conquest, on the way back to Medina, every fortress or city that had been conquered on the outward journey is now bestowed by 'Ali on a Muslim, enjoined to govern justly and in accordance with Muslim law and religion (*dad u din*).⁷

As Ibn Husam declares in the sixth *bait* of his epilogue, he completed his work in 830/1426–27 in the lands of the east, that is, in the peripheral province of Quhistan that was his homeland. At that time, the cultural context in which he was writing was characterised by a long-term interplay between a strong pro-'Alid sentiment,⁸ and a conservative attachment to the ancient Iranian

intact 16th-century copy of Ibn Husam's text at the British Museum, Cat. Ethé, no. 898. This manuscript, dated Jumada I, 965/February–March 1558 by a scribe named Mahmud 'Abd al-Rahman, was Calasso's source for her three pioneering studies of Ibn Husam's *Khavaran-nama*, published over 25 years ago, which provide the foundation for any further analysis of this work.

- 4 The closure of the Golden City by King Dal takes place in the time between the outbreak of Salsal's *coup* and his treacherous murder of his brother Dal, taking possession of his crown and wife.
- 5 Calasso, "Un epopea musulmana", 466–67, n. 44, 469, 471, 480–81, nn. 96–98.
- 6 Since the word "Khavar" usually means East (cf. Calasso, "Il Xavar-name di Ibn Hosam", 155–56, n. 2; *ibid.*, "Un epopea musulmana", 115–17), one may propose that the Khavaran in Ibn Husam's epic refers to Greater Iran, located to the east of Arabia where the Muslim heroes start their journey. This may be supported by the fact that almost all the pagan kings, viziers and generals met by 'Ali have Persian names (e.g. Qubad, Dara, Jamshid, Tahmas, Ardashir, Shapur). This may further imply that they were probably meant by the author to represent the royal courts of pre-Islamic Iran. If this is the case, he may have wished to exemplify the early Islamisation of the Iranians during the first Islamic conquests.
- 7 The converted king Jamshid was granted a mandate over his former region, Khavar-zamin; the queen Shamama became sovereign over the city of Qam al-ruqum, which had formerly belonged to Salsal, and also over the region of Sahil-zamin, whose former king, her brother Tahmas, had been killed because he persisted in refusing Islam.
- 8 The devotion to 'Ali may reflect the popular religious piety current around the native home of Ibn Husam—the village of Khusf in the district of Quhistan, on the edge of Kavir-i Lut, on

past, especially at the Timurid court, where the *Shahnama* was re-edited in 833/1430 by Baysunghur.⁹ 'Ali was accordingly the obvious protagonist for the *Khavaran-nama*,¹⁰ written in the manner of Firdausi's *Shahnama*, the ultimate national heroic epic that the writer inherited from his Iranian forefathers.¹¹

Ibn Husam's Debt to Firdausi's *Shahnama*

The *Shahnama*'s impact on Ibn Husam's work first becomes evident in his following of Firdausi's style in the rhymed verse-form of the *masnavi* and its *mutaqarib* metre, and by his integrating some of Firdausi's verses into the text.¹² Firdausi's influence on Ibn Husam also appears strong in terms of themes: Ibn Husam manipulated episodes taken from the *Shahnama*, often bestowing the traditional roles of Rustam and other heroic figures on 'Ali and his companions.

Ibn Husam's debt to Firdausi indeed is declared by the author himself in a passage where he ponders what he should write about, considering that everything worth saying has already been said and "*there is no pearl that has not been*

the border between Khurasan and Kirman. The region around Khusf seems to have been a particular bastion of Shi'ism; many tombs of 'Alid martyrs have been discovered throughout the province, which Ibn Husam is reported to have visited. Calasso, "Un epeopea musulmana", 396–98. Cf. Charles Melville, "Ibn Ḥusām's *Ḥāvarān-Nāma*", n. 37. For the popular aspect of contemporary pro-'Alid trends in Quhistan, e.g. the *tariqa* Halvatiya, see Jean Aubin, "Un santon Quhistāni"; Calasso, "Un epeopea musulmana", 397 n. 51; Calasso, "Una testimonianza letteraria della 'provincia' timuride", 133–48. The pro-'Alid tendency was also intensified by the Isma'ilism that preserved a distinct presence in that region: Shani, "Some comments", 255, n. 40. For a probable influence of Isma'ili narratives on the tale of the City of Gold in the *Khavaran-nama*, see *ibid.*, 250–56.

- 9 For the influence of the *Shahnama* at this period, see Babayan, *Mystics, monarchs, and messiahs*, 180, 186 (chapter 6); Jean Calmard, "Popular literature under the Safavids", 332–35.
- 10 Ibn Husam also composed many other poems praising 'Ali which became popular in the Shi'i community: Calasso, "Un epeopea musulmana", 396, nn. 47–49. For Ibn Husam's probable adaptation of Persian oral and written versions based on Isma'ili *maghazi*-like narratives about 'Ali, see Shani, "Some comments", 250–56.
- 11 Composed around 1000, the *Shahnama* indeed ranks high in the consciousness of the Iranian people, providing them with a treasury of pre-Islamic epic and historical legends. On the sources of the *Shahnama* in epic cycles of legendary and historical figures of the Iranian folklore, see Nöldeke, *The Iranian National Epic*; Soroudi, "Islamization of the Iranian national hero", 365–82.
- 12 For some of Firdausi's verses incorporated in Ibn Husam's work, see Calasso, "Il Xavarnama di Ibn Hosam", 136, 141–42; *idem*, "Un epeopea musulmana", 400, 433–35; Melville, "Ibn Ḥusām's *Ḥāvarān-Nāma*", 232, n. 60.

*drilled.*¹³ In particular, Ibn Husam refers to Firdausi's eloquence, also admitting that he took from the earlier poet "*one note or two.*" Firdausi's eloquence, says Ibn Husam, pleased God to such effect that He bestowed on him Paradise as his eternal abode.

This declaration by Ibn Husam appears to be reflected in an illustration accompanying the text in a single page in a private collection (fig. 9.1). This page is detached from the earliest extant richly illustrated copy of the *Khavaran-nama*, dated 881–92/1476–87, partly preserved in an arbitrarily bound volume in the Gulistan Palace Library in Tehran (Ms. 5750).¹⁴

The painting shows an angel hovering above two figures standing against lush vegetation in brown-yellow shades with a water-course running across the width of the image and an octagonal pond in the centre. The lavish background may be seen as a reference to the garden of Paradise which God bestowed on Firdausi, the latter represented by the elderly figure on the right of the picture. If this is so, the figure opposite Firdausi would be Ibn Husam at the moment

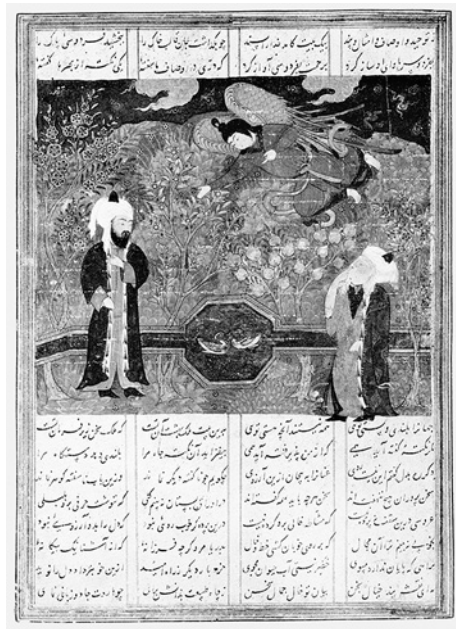


FIGURE 9.1

Jibril appearing before Ibn Husam.
Ibn Husam, Khavaran-nama, Shiraz?
 881–92/1476–87. Detached from the
 Gulistan Palace Library, Tehran, Ms. 5750.
 Private Collection. Reproduced from Grube
 & Fabris, *Miniature islamiche*, pl. 49.

- 13 Renderings of passages from the text of the *Khavaran-nama* are based here and below mostly on a free translation by Afsaneh Khalatbari-Wogan.
- 14 This remarkable manuscript contains 645 pages with 115 illustrations. Discovered in about 1952 by Dr Richard N. Frye of Harvard, the original manuscript was subsequently dispersed among public and private collections in Europe and the United States. See below, note 20.

of receiving the inspiration of “*a note or two*.” The finger which Firdausi puts to his lips, although suggesting the traditional gesture for expressing great amazement, may rather refer here to the unique eloquence of Firdausi’s words which are being transferred from his lips via Jibril to Ibn Husam. It may also explain the triangular movement from Firdausi’s head up to Jibril’s legs and to his curved body, gliding from right to left, hands stretched out towards Ibn Husam to whom the angel seems to speak. It thus represents, in a concisely symbolical manner, the *raison d’être* of Ibn Husam’s epic—that it followed Firdausi’s *Shahnama*, the protagonist here being nonetheless ‘Ali, whose miraculous adventures were all set down through divine inspiration reaching the author by the good offices of the archangel Jibril.

However this may be, the presence of Jibril in this painting is an invention which, apart from its evident association with the abode of Paradise figuring in the accompanying text, is not directly related to that text. The result is the original creation of the artist. As described by the late Ernst Grube, the painting “is a garden scene arranged in purely formal and decorative composition ... The softness of the [subdued] background-colours contrasts with the intense-ness of the colours used to depict the figures [and the sky], all this in a most perfect balance ... that give the page an unusual effect.”¹⁵

In content, the detached illustrated text seems to have been near the beginning of the Tehran manuscript; one may perhaps speculate that the large accompanying painting was as a kind of a frontispiece intended to emphasise Ibn Husam’s thought on Firdausi’s role in inspiring him to write his own epic. The person responsible for the Tehran *Khavaran-nama* copy may have followed the tradition seen in a Jalayirid painting mounted in Bahram Mirza’s album at the Topkapi Palace Library, H. 2154, fol. 20v, where a sleeping poet receives mystical revelation or inspiration by means of an angel approaching his window.¹⁶

The above notion is further articulated by another choice made by the person in charge, i.e. his integrating in the illustrative programme the episode which speaks about Ibn Husam’s dream that he had an intimate encounter with Firdausi in person (fig. 9.2).¹⁷

15 Grube, *Muslim miniature paintings*, 67, who, however, completely misinterpreted the subject of this painting.

16 The painting, reproduced for example in Sims, *Peerless images*, 263, fig. 179, was detached from Khwaju Kirmani’s illustrated *masnavi* at the British Library [BL], Add. 18,113, made in Jalayirid Baghdad between 1396 and 1401.

17 New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art [MET], Rogers Fund, 55.184.1. Cf. Canby, “Art of Iran and Central Asia”, 186, no. 125.



FIGURE 9.2 *Ibn Husam meets Firdausi in a garden. Ibn Husam, Khavaran-nama, Shiraz? 881–92/1476–87. Detached leaf from the Khavaran-nama, Gulistan Palace Library, Tehran, Ms. 5750. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 55.184.1. Courtesy of The Metropolitan Museum of Art.*

According to this dream, Ibn Husam saw Firdausi in the paradise-like rose garden of a palace, one gate leading to the palace, the other to a garden. Firdausi was wearing, according to Ibn Husam's text, "*a woollen cloak like the Sufis and a mantle of silk hanging down, a turban on his head and a staff in his hand, of middling height.*" Ibn Husam rushed to greet Firdausi and hugged him tightly before showering praise upon him, and saying to him: "*O master of speech (sak-hun), you did the Shahnama justice with your speech, your words are pure water, no less ... your heart is a treasure store of wisdom.*" Then, Ibn Husam continues, he clung to Firdausi for some time, chest to chest and shoulder to shoulder, and his mind rejoiced at his words, although he forgot what he had actually said. Nevertheless, his heart "*became a storehouse of secrets as wisdom's sleepy head awoke.*"¹⁸

Following the text, the painting shows the meeting between the two poets in the midst of a luxuriant garden recalling the traditional depictions of palace-gardens: running water in its foreground, and a pavilion on the right, from which the encounter is being watched through the windows by two ladies and a man standing beside the gate.¹⁹ There is also a young man, approaching from the left, who seems to be carrying some refreshment for the two poets.

The elderly figure of Firdausi is again depicted following the text (as above): the staff is placed between the two poets, thus emphasising the "blind centre" created between them. Firdausi's cloak, as also that of Ibn Husam, is folded back along its front to reveal a lining which indeed seems to signify the woollen fabric worn by a Sufi.

Both this Metropolitan painting (fig. 9.2) and the one in a private collection (fig. 9.1) are detached from the aforementioned richly illustrated earliest extant copy of Ibn Husam's *Khavaran-nama*, which is partly preserved at the Gulistan Palace Library in Tehran,²⁰ with about 40 more illustrated pages

18 The highlighted lines are taken from Charles Melville's translation from a 16th-century copy at the Bodleian [BOD] ms. Ouseley 306, f. 99r-v: Melville, "Ibn Ḥusām's *Ḥāvarān-Nāma*", 226. Cf. Calasso, "Un epos musulmana", 399.

19 By their greater size and monumental presence, both protagonists acquire individual prominence and convey a sense of considerable power as compared with the smaller and relatively more elegant figures inside the pavilion.

20 The pages, 38.5 × 27.5 cm, are of Chinese-style hand-made paper. The first page displays an ornamental circular vignette, at the centre of which is written *Kitab-i Khavaran*, inscribed in white and lead oxide *thulth* on a golden background. Pages 2 and 3 have illuminated headings and gilded *tabula ansata*; they contain, in medium *nasta'liq*, 18 couplets, starting as follows: "*to begin with I have opened this happy work in the name of God.*" Other pages are tabulated (28.5 × 20.5cm.) and each is divided into four columns with gilded headings.

scattered in various private and public collections outside Iran. The painted folios have recently been published in facsimile with an introduction by Saeed Anvari.²¹ Made on a large scale, the illustrated folios have painted portions that cover the greater part of the page, corresponding to the length of about 13 to 15 lines of the space reserved for the text. The four-column rectangular text blocks frequently impinge in stepped blocks on the space of the illustration in a way that enables the viewer to be aware of the particular aspects which the painter wishes to emphasise. Each painting illustrates a specific moment described in the verses above. Its area is sometimes partly integrated within the design scheme of the written surface; on other occasions it extends beyond the width of the four-column text and rectangular frame, the extended part correspondingly enclosed sometimes by an angular border-line that extrudes from the normative enclosure, thus diverted from the rectangular frame. Some of these paintings are signed by a certain Farhad, who calls himself "the least or humblest of the slaves" (*kamtarin bandagan*), and are dated in his hand between 881/1476–77 and 892/1487.²² Since signatures were rare at that time,²³ one may assume that Farhad was well known enough to sign his work.²⁴ Considering then the apparent dominant role of Farhad in the manuscript, I shall regard him as the probable master-designer of the project; the many other, unsigned, paintings were probably made, or completed, by less known artists under Farhad's supervision. Stylistically, all the *Khavarān-nama* paintings compare best to work done in the so-called Commercial-Turkman style

21 Anvari, *Khāvarān Nāmeḥ*.

22 For the signed and dated paintings in the Gulistan manuscript see Anvari, *Khāvarān Nāmeḥ*, 84, 86, 88, 91, 112, 115, 118, 129, 133, 136, 139. Other signatures appear, for example, in two paintings preserved at the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin [CBL], ms. 293: Robinson, *Persian paintings*, pl. 9 and Robinson, *Persian miniature painting*, 95–96, no. 125; on a detached leaf at the David Collection: Folsach, *For the privileged few*, no. 21, and in another detached leaf in a private collection, formerly sold at Sotheby's, 12 December 1972, lot 189: Grube, *Miniature islamique*, no. 46. For two other signed paintings, see Zoka, "Khāvarān-nāma", 25.

23 Only two other artists working at the time are known to us by name; they are 'Abd al-Karīm and Muhammad Musa, both mentioned in the respective colophons of two illustrated manuscripts; the first in Qazvini's *ʿAjaʿib al-makhlūqat* at the Royal Asiatic Society [RAS], ms. 178, and the second, in a *Shahnama* copy dated 902/1497, formerly in the Kevorkian Foundation Collection: Robinson, "An unrecorded Persian painter", 204. The latter was sold at Sotheby's, 7 December 1970, 72–73, lot 190—its present whereabouts are unknown to me.

24 Farhad's possible contributions to several other contemporary manuscripts will be discussed separately in another essay, dealing with the stylistic aspects of the paintings. See also Ali Boozari, "Kamtarin bandagan Farhad."

originating in the mid-15th-century Turkman dominions of south-west Iran, mainly in Shiraz.²⁵ An exception is the opinion of Yahya Zoka, who argues that Farhad's paintings were made in Khurasan. Zoka's conclusion derives from the dated colophon which mentions a Mevlevi order (*Katib khadamat al-sharif al-Maulaviya, sana arb'a va khamsin va thaman-maya*) that could only have existed there (or in Konya).²⁶ The Commercial style reached its full bloom in a great number of illustrated manuscripts made in the Shiraz region between about 880/1475 and 911/1505.²⁷ This would mean that the epic composed by Ibn Husam in the eastern region of Quhistan reached the west without much delay.²⁸

25 According to Robinson, *A descriptive catalogue*, 118, who first used the term "commercial" for this style, its centre was Shiraz, where it arose during the third quarter of the 15th century, and in view of its stereotyped character and of the fact that it is found in an enormous number of manuscripts produced between about 1475 and 1505 (over a hundred are recorded), one is justified in regarding it as a commercial style, used in manuscripts sold commercially not only in Persia, but also most probably in Turkey and India. In this context, the work of Farhad may be considered as an important stage in the later developments of the style. Cf. Robinson, *Fifteenth-century Persian painting*, 38–40.

For the generally accepted attribution of the Gulistan volume to the Commercial-Turkman style, see, e.g. Grube, "The miniatures of Shiraz"; Gray, *Persian painting*, 104–7; Hillenbrand, *Imperial images*, 18 (no. 16), 50, (fig. 101), 55–56, (fig. 116), 79–80 (no. 181), 82 (no. 187) and 89–90 (no. 198); Robinson, *Fifteenth-century Persian painting*, 39.

26 Yahya Zoka, "Khāvarān-nāma", 16–29. Zoka then declares that the same artist, Farhad, also signed some paintings of a *Shahnama* dated 891/1486 in BL, Add. 18,188, a richly illustrated manuscript which Ernst Kühnel attributed at the time to Herat: Pope and Ackerman, *Survey of Persian art*, 1829–97 and 1856–57, pl. 883a. The *Shahnama* paintings in Add. 18,188, like those of the *Khavaran-nama*, are of course in the Turkman style of Shiraz, with the same new stylistic features introduced to the old tradition established in Shiraz at the court of Ibrahim Sultan. See also Titley, "Fifteenth century Persian miniature painting", 45–46.

27 As shown by Robinson, *Persian paintings in the John Rylands Library*, 89–94, this style also continued to exert a certain influence there in the century that followed, the direct derivation of the Shiraz–Safavid from the Turkman style in fact to be closely followed in a series of dated manuscripts between 1504 and 1515. For more on the school, see Robinson, *A descriptive catalogue*, 26ff, on paintings from three manuscripts with illustrations in the Turkman style: pls. v, no. 599 (899/1493); VI, nos. 501 and 503 (899/1494); VII, nos. 510 and 545 (907/1501).

28 It may have reached the west with the Aq-Qoyunlu troops of Uzun Hasan, who during their raids in Khurasan, between 874/1469 and 874/1470, indeed stayed for a while in Quhistan, see Vladimir Minorsky, "The struggle for supremacy in Persia after the death of Tīmūr", 35–65, esp. 53.

All in all, the compositions of Ibn Husam encountering Firdausi (figs. 9.1–2) demonstrate the emphasis which the master-designer of the Tehran *Khavaran-nama* copy wished to place on the debt of Ibn Husam to Firdausi as proclaimed in the text.

At the same time, Ibn Husam's aim in fact was rather to transcend his literary model by emphasising 'Ali's religious values and his role as propagator of the Islamic faith—this intention is expressed toward the end of Ibn Husam's epilogue:

*If Tusi planned the words of the Shahnama
To be adorned with [tales of] Rustam
He elevated speech (sakhun) to such a height
that the mind fell short of comprehending it.
But my book is in the name of 'Ali,
My pure wine comes from the goblet of 'Ali.
With every design I imagined in my mind,
My aim was 'Ali and his family (al).²⁹*

Thus, compared with Rustam, the 'Ali of the *Khavaran-nama* wields his sword in a different cause in a different narrative context: 'Ali's endeavour is a religious mission initiated by the Prophet of Islam rather than by secular kings; its goal is to convert to Islam all manner of infidels encountered by the hero in the far-off land of Khavaran. Ultimate success is granted to 'Ali by invulnerability even in the face of death; this is well demonstrated in the incident of the hero treacherously trapped with his horse in a ditch dug by the enemy. This represents two parallel episodes connected respectively with Rustam and 'Ali. As we read in the *Khavaran-nama*, a courtier of Jamshid-Shah, the king of Khavar-zamin, hoping to encourage his king after 'Ali's repeated onslaughts, tells him how Bahman, unable to overcome Rustam, tricked the hero by summoning him to the palace, where he would find Bahman ready to make peace, at the same time ordering a pit to be dug on Rustam's path. A deep hole was excavated, continues the courtier, with sharp swords fixed at the bottom, into which Rustam duly fell, and died. Encouraged by the story about Rustam's death in the pit, the king of Khavar-zamin gave orders for a deep hole to be dug, with sharp swords fixed at the bottom, into which 'Ali would fall and die. However, unlike the *Shahnama* episode, which ends with Rustam dying in the pit together with his horse Rakhsh, the *Khavaran-nama* episode concludes with 'Ali and his mount being saved by his trust in God, and later convincing Jamshid-Shah

29 Trans. Melville, "Ibn Ḥusām's *Ḥāvarān-Nāma*", 227, from BOD, ms. Ouseley 306, f. 192r.

and his court to convert to Islam. Thus, as against Rustam, who died in the pit together with Rakhsh, 'Ali and his mount were able to get out of the pit because of 'Ali's divinely-ordained role in propagating the Islamic faith. As said, this made him invulnerable, able to resist any evil, including the subterfuge of the pagan king Jamshid.³⁰

Rustam was evidently taken by Ibn Husam as a point of comparison because he was the most popular hero of the *Shahnama* and readers were confidently expected to know about him. His primary concern was nevertheless to portray 'Ali as the perfect hero who surpasses Rustam in military prowess, his divinely-ordained invulnerability being granted to him in return for his uprightness, wisdom, morality, and piety.

As will be shown, the master-designer Farhad was deeply aware of the inherent connection between Firdausi's and Ibn Husam's work even to the extent of having recourse to many of the visual forms from traditional *Shahnama* manuscripts; like Ibn Husam, who drew on the *Shahnama* as a privileged model for his epic, so the artist followed suit by imitating the pictorial iconography current in the Shiraz region since the early 15th century to illustrate the *Shahnama* or other heroic cycles of the kind. Then, again like Ibn Husam, he manipulated the illustrated episodes retrieved from the *Shahnama* manuscripts in order to underline the religious aspects of 'Ali's person. The *Shahnama* models were thus adapted and transformed by the *Khavaran-nama* artist for specifically religious purposes, to become saturated with a strong feeling of piety and, particularly, with a deep devotion to 'Ali, whose extraordinary courage and supernatural powers derive from divine inspiration.³¹

The unique status Farhad gave to 'Ali is most apparent in the *Shahnama* "Rustam-iconography" that he used to represent 'Ali's military prowess. This is perhaps best demonstrated by the illustration of Ibn Husam's unprecedented episode of the archangel Jibril inviting the Prophet to watch from his Medina mosque the miraculous deeds being performed by 'Ali in the far-off land of Khavaran (fig. 9.3).³²

30 Also in Melville, "Ibn Ḥusām's *Hāvarān-Nāma*", 232–33. For other points of opposition between the two episodes, suggesting that some aspects at least associating Ibn Husam's work with the national legends of ancient Iran probably originated in sources other than those used by Firdausi for his *Shahnama*, see Shani, "Some comments", nn. 56, 57.

31 Since Ibn Husam's text concentrates mainly on 'Ali, it would seem that the illustrated copy was basically intended for consumers belonging to a fervently pro-'Alid circle. This may suggest that Shi'i-oriented circles were already flourishing in Iran during the 15th century, as if to set the stage for the adoption of Shi'i Islam as the state religion by the Safavid Isma'il I in 1501.

32 See Anvari, *Khāvarān Nāmeḥ*, 91.

When the *Khavaran-nama* master-designer was required to illustrate this episode for the relatively new text by Ibn Husam, he seems to have followed first the accompanying text very carefully. Muhammad is shown standing on what seems to be the roof of the Medina mosque, rendered as a flat architectural form enveloped in a semi-cryptic inscription in square Kufic, while the mounted figure of 'Ali carries a great double-pointed sword over the



FIGURE 9.3 *Jibril invites the Prophet to watch 'Ali in the battlefield. Ibn Husam, Khavaran-nama, Shiraz? 881–92/1476–87. Gulistan Palace Library, Tehran (Ms. 5750). (Anvari, Khāvarān Nāmeḥ, 91).*

shoulder, representing his mythical *dhu'l-faqar*, given to him by the Prophet.³³ His mount, forelegs bent and ears pricked up and alert signifying speed of movement, is dappled, thus following the literary descriptions of Duldul,³⁴ 'Ali's loyal companion in the early wars of Islam. Like the *dhu'l-faqar*, Duldul was given to 'Ali by the Prophet,³⁵ as indeed Ibn Husam emphasises in the texts relating to both: in an episode referring to 'Ali's combat with Salsal, the latter suggests that 'Ali should stop using his sword (calling it a dragon), but 'Ali declines, saying that this is the sword of the Prophet which he ('Ali) has used to decapitate many adversaries;³⁶ in another episode, that of Duldul encountering a marauding lion (fig. 9.6, below), 'Ali encourages his mount to kill the beast by saying to him: *Oh faithful Duldul, you are a gift from Mustafa [Muhammad]*.³⁷

In fig. 9.3 a single enemy lies dead under Duldul's hooves;³⁸ whereas this corpse represents a traditional feature, extensively used by Farhad in his many battlefield scenes (see below), its position here seems to have been calculated to fit the gap between Duldul's fore and hind legs in a way that appears to further emphasize 'Ali's victory. Indeed, it is here, more than elsewhere, that the portrayal of 'Ali is monumental, his huge sword resting quietly on one shoulder, composing a static image; it is a concise and icon-like representation, detached from any specific narrative moment.

Relevant for our discussion is the specificity of this approach which can be best appreciated by comparing this image of 'Ali with that of Rustam in a *Shahnama* copy dated 848/1444 at the Bibliothèque nationale de France,

33 According to tradition, Muhammad obtained this sword as booty in the battle of Badr; it had belonged to a pagan named al-'As b. Munabbih. Both Sunni and Shi'i traditions relate how this particular sword was presented by Muhammad to 'Ali during the battle of Uhud; E. Mittwoch, "Dhu 'l-Faqar", 239–40. Cf. Renard, "Al-Jihād al-Akbar", 227. Although it eventually passed into the possession of the 'Abbasid caliphs, the *dhu'l-faqar* remained an attribute of 'Ali, its divine association restricted to the Shi'is. It is mentioned in Ibn Hisham's *Sira* and in several *hadiths*; see, e.g. Ibn Sa'd, *al-Tabaqat al-kubra*, II, 2 and I, 485–86.

34 In some cases, as here, Duldul is depicted as a dappled pink steed, in others as dappled grey, or as spotted white or brown.

35 That both Duldul and the *Dhu'l-faqar* were earlier owned by the Prophet is mentioned for example in the list of the latter's possessions in Ibn Sa'd, *al-Tabaqat*: tr. Moinul Haq, 577, 583. Cf. Bal'ami's history, tr. Zotenberg, *Chronique*, 199, 201.

36 For the full text and illustration see Anvari, *Khāvarān Nāmeḥ*, 36.

37 Ibid., 124.

38 Other corpses, battered limbs, and decapitated heads are in fact scattered all over the field, thus also following the text. "The Prophet was looking towards the land of Khavaran and saw all that could be seen: a great army lying dead in a field."

showing Rustam's triumph over Sava Shah, who is lying dead under the hooves of Rakhsh, the hero's horse (fig. 9.4).³⁹

The two compositions are obviously similar. This may imply a common iconographic tradition in *Shahnama* manuscripts, or even a specific stock-image that Farhad used to depict 'Ali in fig. 9.3; both Rustam and 'Ali carry their weapon over one shoulder, and they are both mounted on a galloping horse under whose hooves a single victim lies dead. However, Sava Shah's corpse is shown being actually trampled under Rakhsh's fore leg, illustrating a specific dramatic moment in the narrative. The body of 'Ali's victim may rather be understood as a symbol detached from any narrative moment and presenting an abstract idea about 'Ali's military prowess.⁴⁰



FIGURE 9.4
Death of Sava Shah. Firdausi, *Shahnama*, Shiraz, 848/1444. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Suppl. persan 494, fol. 207r. Courtesy of the Bibliothèque nationale de France.

- 39 BNF, Suppl. persan 494, f. 207r; Rustam wears here his tiger-skin coat and his typical tiger/bardlas head helmet.
- 40 In view of the general atmosphere of esoteric Sufi mysticism which was pervading Iran at that time, the single corpse under Duldul's hooves might well be regarded as symbolising the evil forces subdued by the Perfect Man—'Ali—the propagator of Islam and the enemy of all manner of evil, as indeed is strongly emphasised throughout the epic. Also worth noting is a possible Sasanian legacy behind this concept; it recalls the rock-relief from Naqsh-e Rostam representing the investiture of Ardashir I by Ahura Mazda, where the constant struggle between Good and Evil, deeply-rooted in Zoroastrian gnostical thought, is visualized by the naked figure of Ahriman lying dead under Ahura Mazda's horse.

By further comparison, 'Ali is portrayed with a fiery halo signifying his sanctity, obviously absent in the portrayal of Rustam. The fiery halo added to the already striking figure is a convention then recently introduced in Turkman Shiraz, where the fiery halo attributed to 'Ali was probably intended to express the Shi'i concept of the so-called *nur Muhammad*, the divine light transmitted to 'Ali as to Muhammad through their common grandfather, 'Abd al-Muttalib—as Muhammad is sacred, so is 'Ali.⁴¹ The fiery halo thus signals a paramount shift of emphasis, indicating the divinely-ordained nature of 'Ali's actions.

The designation of 'Ali as divine is further symbolised by Muhammad's and Jibril's gesture of blessing. The Prophet's right hand stretched out towards 'Ali, and Jibril placed between them like the apex of a triangle, one hand stretched towards the Prophet, on the right, the other towards 'Ali, on the left.

The presence of the archangel Jibril and that of the Prophet standing on the roof of a mosque certainly agree with the accompanying text. However, the *Khavaran-nama* artist seems to have wished to design a rather conceptual image, where the dramatic centre of the painting would be the figure of 'Ali, who indeed gets about two-thirds of the surface. Furthermore, although the Prophet is the one making the gesture of blessing, and although he seems larger than 'Ali, also standing on a higher level, 'Ali is nonetheless represented as equal to Muhammad in that they both carry the same fiery halo, a symbol of their common spiritual nature.⁴² This pictorial equality is an altogether new concept when compared with the iconography in earlier paintings where the two appear, when the halo is assigned only to Muhammad.⁴³ The painting in fig. 9.3 is probably the best instance of Farhad's ability and ingenuity in illustrating an unprecedented episode in a new text composed only a few decades earlier and never yet illustrated. It is here that the conceptual frame of thought that guided the artist throughout the manuscript is fully presented.

41 For the Shi'i concept of the Divine Light bestowed on 'Ali, see Rosenthal, *Knowledge triumphant*; Rubin, "Pre-existence and light", 62–119; idem, "Prophets and progenitors", 41–65; Shani, "The lion image in Safavid *Mī'rāj* paintings", 265–426 (esp. 272 n. 43; 273 nn. 50–51; 297–98).

42 'Ali's sacred personality as being equal to the Prophet is also indicated by his wearing the same robe with a red lining.

43 E.g., the Khaibar episode in Hafiz Abru's *Kulliyat-i tarikhi*, of Herat 818–19/1415–16, Topkapi Palace Library [TSMK], Bagdat 282, f. 169r; Lentz & Lowry, *Timur and the princely vision*, 132, no. 46. Exceptional though is the painting on f. 265v of Iskandar Sultan's Anthology at the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation L.A. 161, made in Shiraz of 813/1410–11, where both Muhammad and 'Ali carry a fiery halo. For a detailed discussion, see Shani, "Noah's Ark and the Ship of Faith", 164–67, fig. 8.



FIGURE 9.5 'Ali wounding Salsal with an arrow. Ibn Husam, *Khavaran-nama*, Shiraz? 881-92/1476-87. Gulistan Palace Library in Tehran (Ms. 5750). (Anvari, *Khāvarān Nāmeḥ*, 41).

A procedure of borrowing *cum* adaptation of the *Shahnama*'s Rustam-cycle iconography again characterises Farhad's painting of 'Ali's final attack against his chief antagonist, Salsal (fig. 9.5).⁴⁴ In the painting 'Ali holds a bow from which he has just shot an arrow at his opponent; the latter bends over his charger in a posture that indicates pain. Salsal's reaction shows that 'Ali's blow was fatal, in response to which: *Salsal's back bends under the impact of this attack, crying out to 'Ali "Oh sipahdar, you have eventually succeeded in bringing down and killing the leader of Gham.."*

This image strongly recalls the traditional *Shahnama* paintings where Isfandiyar bends over his horse, blinded by the double-pointed arrow shot by Rustam. A contemporary Turkman example can be seen in a *Shahnama* dated 885/1480 at the Chester Beatty Library.⁴⁵

Farhad's use of the visual formula representing the prowess of Rustam *vis-à-vis* Isfandiyar may be taken to show how deeply rooted was Farhad's work in the pictorial iconography of the *Shahnama*, echoing the literary emulation used by Ibn Husam. The very specific stance of 'Ali, identical to that of Rustam, perhaps indicates that Farhad was also using a given stock-image as model; the bow still in his right hand, his left arm raised in a gesture indicating that he has just released an arrow.

The procedure of borrowing together with adaptation of the *Shahnama* Rustam-cycle iconography is also evident in the illustration of the *Khavaran-nama* episode where the dramatic encounter between Duldul, and a marauding lion occurs (fig. 9.6).⁴⁶

This follows a text imitating the *Shahnama* episode where a similar encounter, unique to the *Shahnama*, occurs at the beginning of Rustam's *Haft khan*, a marauding lion being attacked by Rakhsh. When the *Khavaran-nama* illustrator was required to represent this episode for the relatively new text, he doubtless consulted the corresponding episode in the *Shahnama* paintings traditional in the Shiraz region. The connection in this particular painting

44 Anvari, *Khāvarān Nāmeḥ*, 41.

45 CBL, Pers. 158, f. 340v; Cf. Melville, "Ibn Ḥusām's *Ḥāvarān-Nāma*", 233 and n. 66. See also the *Shahnama* Project digital archive edited by Charles Melville (hereafter SNP): <http://shahnama.caret.cam.ac.uk/new/jnama/card/ceillustration:-1844416899>. Other Turkman *Shahnama* examples can be seen in Suppl. persan 1280, f. 312r (late 15th c.); Suppl. persan 228, f. 254r (896/1490) and Suppl. persan 493, f. 317r (844/1441) on the BNF data base:
<http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8427188g/f631.image>
<http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8406159w/f513.image>
<http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8422997n/f647.image>

46 Anvari, *Khāvarān Nāmeḥ*, 71.



FIGURE 9.6 *Ali and his mount, Duldul, encountering a marauding lion. Ibn Husam, Khavaran-nama, Shiraz? 881–92/1476–87. Gulistan Palace Library, Tehran (Ms. 5750). (Anvari, Khāvarān Nāmeḥ, 71).*

is undeniable when one compares the iconography with various *Shahnama* manuscripts showing Rakhsh slaying the lion.⁴⁷

47 Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, ms. or. Fol. 4255, f. 38r (894/1489), see SNP <http://shahnama.caret.cam.ac.uk/new/jnama/card/ceillustration:1844416899>. It is repeated in other paintings of the Commercial-Turkman style, such as BOD, ms. Elliott 325, f. 86r (899/1494): Robinson, "Origin and date", fig. 4. Cf. Melville, "Ibn Ḥusām's *Ḥāvarān-Nāma*", 232, n. 62. See also the late-15th-century *Shahnama* at the David Collection, 48/2006: Folsach, *For*

However, whereas in the *Shahnama* illustrations Rakhsh is shown dealing with the lion while Rustam sleeps nearby, the illustrator of Ibn Husam's text followed his author by adding details about 'Ali's significant role in the event, as presented in the text blocks above and below the painting:

*The famous Haidar ('Ali) cried out and the mountains reverberated from the sound of his shout, "Oh faithful Duldul, you are a gift from Mustafa (Muhammad), give this cat your manly strength. Who is he to pick a fight with you?" When Duldul saw 'Ali standing next to him, he gathered all his strength and attacked the ferocious lion, raised his leg and stamped on his head with such force that the lion's brain shattered and his corpse was thrown to the ground. Duldul bit through the lion's back and struck the lion so often that the stones turned ruby red with his blood.*⁴⁸

Accordingly, 'Ali is shown approaching the scene in a vigorous attitude, and is moreover emphasised in size in relation to the two animals, and a fiery halo is added to the already striking figure; 'Ali thus becomes both the Endangered and the Protector or Defender against evil, represented here by the lion.

Again, unlike the traditional Rustam painting, the dramatic central encounter is here watched from behind the rocky horizon by mounted warriors who seem to react to it with various gestures. Their appearance here may reflect the accompanying text, *When the warriors saw Haidar coming to the battlefield, they began to chant and hail his name*. The artist thus followed the text very carefully, as in fact he did elsewhere. At the same time, mounted warriors in the background of the central event are deeply rooted in the traditional *Shahnama* repertoire of battlefield scenes, the very stuff of epic poetry, perpetuated by Ibn Husam as they are in the *Shahnama*. As in the latter, the *Khavaran-nama*'s tightly grouped spectators are used as subsidiary elements that sometimes have very little, if any, direct connection with the text. They are part of a set of forms used by artists to create a compositional envelope for the central event, reinforcing the violence of the duel, and inviting the spectator to participate in the drama as if it were in a stage production. They thus enrich the scenery by watching and reacting to the main event by various gestures; some put a finger to their lips to express amazement, others are presented as

the privileged few, 55, no. 22. A pre-Turkman example appears on St. Petersburg, Institute of Oriental Manuscripts [IOS], C. 1654, f. 60v (849/1445) made in the southern provincial style prevalent in the Shiraz region: Binyon *et al.*, *Persian miniature painting*, 73–74, no. 60, pl. LVI-B.

48 Free translation by Julia Rubanovich.

concerned commentators, one person placing a hand on another's shoulder, both apparently commenting or arguing, others carry banners and standards extending beyond the upper line of the text-blocks to the upper margin, and a single mounted warrior usually sounds a long-bodied trumpet. They are all placed as filler figures in the spandrels of an arched horizon-line in a way that had become part of the local, pre-Turkman and Turkman tradition designed to occupy the background of the many battlefield scenes encountered in *Shahnama* and other texts. Thus relegated to the upper tiers of the picture plane, they are silhouetted against a blue sky from a high view-point, enabling the artist to emphasise the centrality of the principal figures in the foreground.

That Farhad incorporated them in fig. 9.6 might mean that, apart from respecting Ibn Husam's text, he considered the episode as one of the manuscript's many battlefield scenes, to be discussed below.

Shahnama Models for the *Khavaran-nama* Battlefield Paintings

In all the *Khavaran-nama* battlefield paintings, the composition consists of a flatly-rendered rounded field with high horizon line edged by a crest of perfunctorily suggested craggy rocks drawn in a strip topped by a curved surface of sky with large tailed clouds and with tightly grouped mounted warriors or other spectators half-hidden by the background rocks. Whether in confrontation or pursuit, the warriors usually ride on horses caparisoned in lavish textiles with long fringes. All the riders wear the cuirass after the Chinese fashion that was adopted by the Turks and Mongols early in the Middle Ages. Also common is the treatment of the warriors as stereotyped gold-visored figures, their helmets rendered by a plain brow band with pendant ear flaps, and a spherical top terminating in a small gap through which a tuft of identifying horse-hair is threaded, often in the shape of a red plume blowing in the wind. In most cases, the brow-piece and ear flaps are in gold,⁴⁹ while the top part is dark, made of raised fluting that appears to be lobed.

All auxiliary warriors hold their reins in the left hand, and move forward with gestures of attack; some wield swords or spears, sometimes maces or battle-axes, as if about to strike, others grip an arrow, preparing to shoot. Victims are either cut in two with a sword, or shot through with arrows;

49 According to Robert Elgood, "A 15th/16th century Turkman helmet", 58–63, 92–96, the forehead band and the ear flaps appear to have been made of a copper alloy with gilt ornamentation; the pendant ear protection suggests padding, necessary under the heavy helmet.

others are strangled, beheaded, speared, and impaled. Some victims lie dead in the foreground, their battered corpses sprawling under the horses' hooves. Occasionally a chain of craggy foreground rocks, with warriors behind them, envelopes the composition from below. Some of the warring scenes depict a battle between two forces;⁵⁰ others show a single combat, the two protagonists occasionally bracketed by their attendants.⁵¹

Farhad's traditional inheritance is recognised best in instances of single cavalry combats, where the military aspect of the event is conveyed by formulae and stock images drawn from a shared artistic background. Since at least the early and throughout the entire 15th century, these schemes had become part of the canon adopted in illustrations of the *Shahnama* and other heroic epics, thus proliferated in the Shiraz region readily available to the artist. Like all formulae, they were virtually interchangeable between various scenes of the same type "performed" by different characters.

The discussion that follows will consider several visual formulae that the *Khavaran-nama* master-designer recognised in the traditional battlefield images reflected in Ibn Husam's text. Sometimes the artist used mirror-constructions to add variety to the otherwise rather limited repertoire of generic visual *topoi* available, virtually interchangeable with other scenes of the same type.

This kind of borrowing process may be seen, for example, in the episodes of Abu'l-Mihjan using his lance to lift the foe from the saddle, keeping him suspended in mid-air (fig. 9.7).⁵² The text reads:

... at last, Abu'l-Mihjan charged forward and came close to the king; he flanked the latter and thrust the lance into his chest. The lance pierced the king's body and protruded from the other side. Abu'l-Mihjan then raised and turned the body. He was so deft that it was as if he had a fly in his hand. He held the body high until all the warriors had seen what he had done.

50 For examples see Anvari, *Khāvarān Nāmeḥ*, 27, 37, 38, 40, 45, 65, 78, 87, 94, 104, 107, 119, 121, 137.

51 Ibid., 29, 41, 58, 59, 62, 63, 64, 81, 83, 84, 88, 89, 93, 97, 100, 101, 102, 117, 123, 126, 127, 129, 135. In their literary form, the single combats take place to fill in the time when both armies are waiting for general reinforcements to be brought up. These stories have always been very popular, probably because of the battles of the *Rukhs* (Champions), where all eleven Iranian heroes defeated every one of their twelve Turanian enemies (Bizhan fought twice); cf. Charles Melville, "Serial killers: The mise-en-page of Firdausi's 'Davazdah rukh'".

52 Anvari, *Khāvarān Nāmeḥ*, 88.



FIGURE 9.7 *Abu'l-Mihjan lifts his foe with a lance. Ibn Husam, Khavaran-nama, Shiraz? 881–92/1476–87. Gulistan Palace Library, Tehran (Ms. 5750). (Anvari, Khāvarān Nāmeḥ, 88).*

The painting which follows this passage is thus a close illustration of what is happening in the episode, and again in the story of Sa'd-i Vaqqas, who lifts his enemy in the same manner, the riderless mount again bolting away from the battlefield.⁵³

53 Ibid., 117, where the text speaks about Sa'd-i Vaqqas killing one of the Khavaran's army chiefs. He attacks him with a lance (spear), lifts him from his brownish-red horse, and carries him towards the Khavaran army.



FIGURE 9.8

Rustam lifts Pilsam off his horse. Firdausi, Shahnama, Commercial-Turkman style (Christie's, 1971, lot no. 31, p. 11, pl. 111)
© 1971 Christie's Images Limited.

The formula of the hero using his lance to lift a foe from the saddle was evidently culled from the Shirazi *Shahnama* tradition in illustrating two episodes of Rustam lifting his enemy with a lance; in one, the enemy is Pilsam, in the other Shangul.⁵⁴ A Turkman example of the formula appears on a single *Shahnama* folio sold at Christie's in 1971, illustrating the episode of Rustam using his lance to pluck Pilsam off his horse (fig. 9.8). It was similarly used by the Turkmans to illustrate a Persian translation of Qazvini's *'Aja'ib al-makhlukat*.⁵⁵

To confirm Farhad's deep roots in the pictorial iconography of the *Shahnama*, the Rustam-cycle in particular, we may look next at four other of the *Khavaran-nama* paintings which repeat, in various mirror-images, yet another well-rooted formula: that of the hero lifting his foe off the saddle and keeping him suspended in mid-air by the belt. In two cases, the feat is accomplished by Malik al-Ashtar, one of 'Ali's companions (fig. 9.9a–b),⁵⁶ while in

54 An early example of the Pilsam fight appears on British Museum [BM], OA 1948.10–9.048, a detached page of a *Shahnama* at the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge [FTZ], ms. 22-1948 (c. 839–844/1435–40) in a Shiraz style that had developed under Ibrahim Sultan: Canby, *Persian painting*, 55, fig. 31. For an early example of the Shangul-contest, see *Shahnama*, CUL, Or. 420, f. 191v (841/1437): SNP, <http://shahnama.caret.cam.ac.uk/new/jnama/card/ceillustration:743804254>. In both scenes, the Turkman warriors differ from those in earlier illustrations by lacking the elbow-pieces and chain-mail about the shoulders that occurred before.

55 RAS, ms. 178, f. 283r: Brend & Melville, *Epic of the Persian kings*, 157 (no. 57); Robinson, "An unrecorded Persian painter", 203–9. Rustam is mentioned eighth in a list of heroes, as one able to lift an enemy from the saddle with his spear.

56 Malik al-Ashtar's prowess is watched by 'Ali from behind a hollow made by a slope in the background field, a matter that will be discussed later.



FIGURE 9.9a *Malik lifts Abu'l-Mihjan by the belt. Ibn Husam, Khavaran-nama, Shiraz? 881-92/1476-87. David Collection, inv. no. 13/1988 (detached leaf: 39.5 × 29 cm; miniature: 17.8 × 20.5 cm). Detached from the Gulistan Palace Library in Tehran, Ms. 5750. Courtesy of The David Collection, Copenhagen. Photo: Pernille Klemp.*



FIGURE 9.9b *Malik al-Ashtar's prowess watched by 'Ali Ibn Husam, Khavaran-nama, Shiraz? 881-92/1476-87. Gulistan Palace Library, Tehran (Ms. 5750). (Anvari, Khāvarān Nāmeḥ, 28).*



FIGURE 9.9C *‘Ali lifting Nushhad by the belt. Ibn Husam’s Khavaran-nama, Shiraz? 881–92/1476–87. Gulistan Palace Library, Tehran (Ms. 5750). (Anvari, Khavārān Nāmeḥ, 101).*



FIGURE 9.9d 'Ali, bare-handed, lifts Mir Sayyaf by the belt. Ibn Husam's *Khavaran-nama*, Shiraz? 881–92/1476–87. Gulistan Palace Library, Tehran (Ms. 5750). (Anvari, *Khāvarān Nāmeḥ*, 126).

two others it is 'Ali who deploys his strength against Nushhad (fig. 9.9c)⁵⁷ and Mir Sayyaf (fig. 9.9d)⁵⁸ respectively.

The visual association evoked by figs. 9a–d is that of the traditional *Shahnama* episode of Rustam lifting Afrasiyab by the belt, frequently used in the Shiraz region from the early 15th century onwards,⁵⁹ as late Turkman instances also reveal.⁶⁰

As in the *Shahnama* copies, the *Khavaran-nama* hero inserts two fingers under the enemy's belt, grasping the belt tightly and flinging the man into the air so swiftly that he remains suspended. However, once the *Khavaran-nama* hero is 'Ali himself (fig. 9.9c–d) a fiery halo surrounding the head clearly signifies his sanctity as a religious hero whose extraordinary deed is part of a divinely-ordained mission. Moreover, unlike the specific iconographical attributes attached to the non-religious figure of Rustam, 'Ali's portrayal in the *Khavaran-nama* paintings is that of an ardent warrior in Muslim garb, riding his pink-dappled mount Duldul. It is here clearly demonstrated, then, that Farhad drew on the illustrated *Shahnama* while evidently intending to demonstrate the unique status of 'Ali *vis-à-vis* the *Shahnama* heroes as well as other characters presented in Ibn Husam's text.

57 'Ali's prowess, hereby rendered according to tradition, is yet endowed also with the *dhu'l-faqar*, thus following the text preceding the painting, according to which it was held by 'Ali in his left hand, courageously wielding it against a crowd of warriors whom he confronted in the battlefield.

58 The prowess of 'Ali is described in the text preceding the painting. Accordingly, he is shown rushing forward on his mount while lifting Mir Sayyaf, whose charger speeds away from the scene; bolting towards the left, it is breaking through the frame into the margin. This rather drastic compositional device enhances the despair of the defeated foe, as the panic-stricken horse leaves him suspended in mid-air.

The background Muslim spectators, although a deeply-rooted convention in Persian painting, is here combined with a group of camels, thus following the text which reads, 'Ali tied him [Mir Sayyaf] and placed him on the camel. From there he made Duldul to gallop, passing the desert until they reached Khavar-zamin, together with the whole caravan.

59 Early, pre-Turkman examples occur in BOD, Ouseley, Add. 176, f. 63v: Sims, *Peerless images*, 220, fig. 131; Lentz & Lowry, *Timur and the princely vision*, 162, fig. 52; Abdullaeva & Melville, *The Persian Book of Kings*, 73–74, fig. 44, and in FTZ, ms. 22–1948, f. 22v (c. 839/1435): Brend & Melville, *Epic of the Persian kings*, 68 (no. 7).

60 BNF, Suppl. persan 1280, f. 48r: Blochet, *Les enluminures*, pl. xxx1b; McAlister, "A Shāh Nāmāh of 1482", 131; SNP, <http://shahnama.caret.cam.ac.uk/new/jnama/card/ceillustration:-658145050>; see also Academy of Sciences, Tashkent, inv. M-287-27109, f. 22v (Yazd, c. 900–901/1494–96): Suleimanov & Suleimanova, *Miniatures illuminations*, 131, no. v/33.

How Form and Belief Act with and React to Each Other

The paintings on figs. 9.5–7, 9a–d clearly reflect Farhad's manner of following the traditional 15th-century *Shahnama* iconography of battlefield scenes,⁶¹ the latter being adapted and transformed by the *Khavarān-nama* artist for specifically religious purposes, to become imbued with a strong feeling of piety and, particularly, with deep devotion to 'Ali. In all cases, moreover, the iconographical attributes associated with the non-religious figures of Rustam and other heroes are replaced by those attributed to 'Ali, who displays a typically Muslim garb with a relatively broad and low turban lightly looped under the chin, a folded piece of cloth falling along the side and a short dangling tail at the back of the head. In assigning 'Ali a flame-halo and also in significantly enlarging his figure *vis-à-vis* that of his opponents the artist evidently intended to emphasise 'Ali's exalted nature as it is described in the Shi'i-oriented text.

Our discussion will go on to a selection of other themes retrieved from the traditional *Shahnama* repertoire, as also from that of other literary genres. They all are based on the placing of 'Ali in a setting traditionally given to a royal personage, while incontrovertibly elevating his status by means of the fiery halo, naturally absent in the portrayal of any *Shahnama* royalty.

'Ali's Royal-Like Iconographic Linkage with Prominent Characters in the *Shahnama* and other Literary Genres

'Ali's linkage with royalties is already apparent in fig. 9.9b, where Malik al-Ashtar's prowess is being watched by 'Ali standing on the left, behind a hollowed slope of the background hill. In terms of compositional layout, this painting follows a long-standing tradition in which the central action, whether on a battlefield or elsewhere, is being viewed by a prominent person, such as royalty, placed behind the left-side cavity made by the slope of a background hill. Early examples of the formula, all from the Shiraz region, are numerous.⁶²

61 For other kinds of cavalry duels adopted by Farhad from the local *Shahnama* repertoire (not dealt with here), see Anvari, *Khāvarān Nāmeḥ*, 59, 83, 93, 94, 105, 121, 129; for the hero stabbing a rider who is about to fall off his mount, *ibid.*, 27, 40, 61, 65, 100, 120; for the mounted hero who has just cut off his opponent's head, *ibid.*, 81, 135; and for the hero shooting an arrow at his opponent, *ibid.*, 41; cf. a detached leaf sold at Sotheby's, 12 December 1972, lot 189, see Grube, *Muslim miniature paintings*, no. 46.

62 E.g. a detached *Zafarnama* painting from 839/1436 in Binney 3rd Collection, no. 28, depicting the episode of Amir Shaikh Nur al-Din killing a lion in front of Timur: Ettinghausen,

A traditional motif is the depiction of the king, mounted, in the shade of a parasol held by his servant, as well as the gesture of astonishment expressed by putting a finger to his mouth.⁶³

That Farhad was aware of the royal association when configuring this particular painting (fig. 9.9b) is evident in another *Khavaran-nama* picture, where he used the same *Shahnama* formula to illustrate the episode of Jamshid, the king of Khavar, witnessing 'Ali's mount, Duldul, striking down the companions of the king (fig. 9.10).⁶⁴ Here, Jamshid watches the central event from the background, mounted, in the shade of a parasol held by his servant, his gesture of astonishment expressed by putting a finger to his mouth. The king is shown against lush greenery, representing an alternative landscape type to the barren hillsides of the battlefield scenes discussed so far.

The royal association suggested in fig. 9.9b by placing 'Ali in the location formally designated for royal personages was most probably intended, then, to convey a message about 'Ali's superiority also over his young companion. 'Ali's outstretched right hand may further suggest that Farhad wished to present a visual manifestation of 'Ali's role as a supportive leader blessing his companion's prowess, his haloed figure further signifying his divinely-ordained mission as mediator between God and his companion's victory in the battle. In other words, this depiction of 'Ali may be seen as an iconological means to convey that Malik's successful performance was only made possible by the supportive presence of 'Ali.⁶⁵

Another example of the same kind of iconological adaptation is represented in another *Khavaran-nama* painting, which shows 'Ali stretching out his hand toward Malik al-Ashtar who is riding from right to left while looking back at

Islamic art, fig. 28. The two screen-like coulisses are preceded by a foreground layer, which, as in the *Khavaran-nama* examples, consists of an impressive chain of rocks that adds depth to the composition. See also BOD, Ouseley Add. 176, f. 342r: Abdullaeva & Melville, *The Persian Book of Kings*, 121, fig. 84; Papadopoulos, *Esthétique de l'art musulman*, fig. 630. Also, CUL, Or. 420, f. 116v (841/1437), where Siyavush plays polo before Afrasiyab: SNP, <http://shahnama.caret.cam.ac.uk/new/jnama/card/ceillustration:1692795595>.

63 Repeated in BL, Add. 18,188, f. 74r (892/1486), illustrating the episode of Zal lifting his foe by the belt before Manuchihr: SNP, <http://shahnama.caret.cam.ac.uk/new/jnama/imagepage/ceillustration:-1845505502>.

64 Anvari, *Khāvarān Nāmeḥ*, 124.

65 The significance of this attitude to 'Ali can be even better appreciated when the painting is seen in an art-historical context. The position given to 'Ali had until then been awarded only to the Prophet. See my forthcoming study on this theme, "From veneration to deep devotion in the portrayal of 'Ali b. Abu Ṭalib"; see also Serpil Bağcı, "From texts to pictures: 'Ali in manuscript painting", esp. 251–55.



FIGURE 9.10 *Duldul strikes down the companions of Jamshid, the Khavar king. Ibn Husam, Khavaran-nama, Shiraz? 881–92/1476–87. Gulistan Palace Library, Tehran (Ms. 5750). (Anvari, Khāvarān Nāmeḥ, 124).*

his pursuers, one of whom is about to release an arrow from his bow (fig. 9.11).⁶⁶ The black-and-white barking dog attacking Malik's horse may symbolize the debased condition of the enemy, a suggestion based on Reid's comments regarding the distinction between the shepherd dog and the chief's horse among the Turkmans.⁶⁷

66 CBL, Pers. Ms. 293/3: Hillenbrand, *Imperial images*, 79–80, no. 181; Arberry *et al.*, *The Chester Beatty*, III, 61–62. Malik is here being watched by 'Ali from the upper left corner wielding the *Dhu'l-faqar* over his left shoulder, as if ready to join the battle. 'Ali's role as a divinely-ordained supportive leader is enhanced by a banner crowned by a finial with the name *Allah* shown in reverse, held by one of the five mounted soldiers.

67 See the poem quoted by Reid, *Tribalism and society*, 18 and n. 28.



FIGURE 9.11 'Ali watching Malik al-Ashtar's prowess. Ibn Husam, *Khavaran-nama*, Shiraz? 881-92/1476-87. Dublin, Chester Beatty Library, Pers. Ms. 293/8. Detached from the Gulistan Palace Library manuscript Ms. 5750. Courtesy of The Trustees of the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin.

'Ali's linkage with royalties re-occurs in many other examples, of which the most telling is that of 'Ali's replacing secular rulers in enthronement scenes; some are placed within structures,⁶⁸ others are situated out of doors. Following the formulaic iconography designated throughout the 15th century for royal garden festivities, Farhad's outdoor scenes are set in the mood of a relaxed and festive occasion in an open meadow, sometimes beside a stream, with 'Ali seated on a costly carpet or throne laid under the shade of a tree or of a satin tent whose canopy is usually of white cloth embroidered with an elaborate blue arabesque pattern. He is always accompanied by attendants, standing guard or offering refreshments, while messengers kneel in submissive postures.⁶⁹ A contemporary painting for comparison appears on a single page at the Berenson Collection at Villa I Tatti, Florence, Shīrāz, c. 896/1490 (fig. 9.12).⁷⁰ Also conforming to convention are the costly dishes in the foreground, including blue-and-white Chinese vases, or inlaid metal ewers and cups, as well as the background vegetation. In a second variation, 'Ali is seated under a delicately embroidered garden pavilion.⁷¹ That Farhad evidently realised the effect that such a royal association would create regarding the superiority of 'Ali is

68 E.g. Anvari, *Khāvarān Nāmeḥ*, 128. By the 15th century, these familiar compositional conventions had become a stereotyped image, reproduced over and over.

69 Ibid., 114, 111 and 92 respectively. There are numerous examples in more or less contemporary Turkman *Shahnama* and other genres, e.g. BNF, Suppl. persan 1280, ff. 22r, 465r (ca. 896/1490): Blochet, *Musulman painting*, pl. LXXIX; a folio in The L.A. Mayer Museum for Islamic Art in Jerusalem (Shiraz, 899/1493): Hasson, *Court amusements*, 45; Sotheby's, 1 December, 1969 (lot 48) (c. 885/1480), at present probably at the Kraus Collection; Nizami's *Khamṣa* at the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, M. 468, f. 262r: Schmitz, *Islamic and Indian manuscripts*, Cat. 3: pl. 5, fig. 42; 'Assar Tabrizi, *Mīhr u Mushtari*, John Rylands Library in Manchester [JRL], Ryl Pers 24, f. 134r (c. 892/1486): Robinson, *Persian paintings*, 89–94, no. 429.

70 Special thanks to Giovanni Pagliarulo, for his assistance there. Cf. Baily, "The Bernard Berenson Collection", 2, fig. 1.

71 E.g. Anvari, *Khāvarān Nāmeḥ*, 30. For an early example, see CUL, Or. 420, f. 148v (841/1437), SNP, <http://shahnama.caret.cam.ac.uk/new/jnama/imagepage/ceillustration:1588649904>.

For more or less contemporary Turkman *Shahnama* mss, see in Khalili Family Trust in London (c. 890–91/1485–86): Khalili, *Visions of splendor*; BNF, Suppl. persan 1280, f. 258v: Richard, *Splendeurs persanes*, 113, no. 72; BL, Add. 18,188, ff. 119v, 424r (892/1486); and CBL, Pers. 157, f. 5v; Pers. 158, ff. 1v, 289r (892/1486): SNP, <http://shahnama.caret.cam.ac.uk/new/jnama/card/cemanuscript:1123933083> and

<http://shahnama.caret.cam.ac.uk/new/jnama/card/cemanuscript:1728957543>.



FIGURE 9.12 *Two kings talking surrounded by five dignitaries and servants. Detached from an unknown manuscript. Shiraz, c. 896/1490. The Berenson Collection at Villa I Tatti, Florence 13/1988. Courtesy Florence, Villa I Tatti, Collezione the Berenson, reproduced by permission of the President and Fellows of Harvard College. Photo: Donato Pineider, Firenze.*

evident; he used similar compositions, repeatedly, to represent episodes concerning secular rulers appearing in the manuscript.⁷²

The *Shahname* precedent is most conspicuous in the outdoor episode where the enthroned figure of 'Ali watches the execution of an enemy (fig. 9.13); this image represents a very specific formulaic iconography, deeply-rooted in the local tradition of the *Shahname*,⁷³ and also in the *Khamsa* (fig. 9.14).⁷⁴ As in the *Khavaran-nama* painting, a bearded personage kneels before the king while behind him stands the executioner with a drawn sword.

The associative linkage between 'Ali and a *Shahname* royalty is expressed in various other ways, where 'Ali occupies, or performs, the traditional role of a

72 For his use of similar interior settings to illustrate secular scenes, see, e.g., Anvari, *Khāvarān Nāmeḥ*, 90, 95, 109, 131; Hillenbrand, *Imperial images*, 55–56, no. 101, no. 116; Canby, *Princes, poets & paladins*, 33, pl. 12; Sotheby's, 12 December 1972, lot 190. For his use of similar exterior settings to illustrate secular scenes, see, e.g., Anvari, *Khāvarān Nāmeḥ*, 86; Canby, "Painters of Persia and their art", iv; Philadelphia Museum, 1996–120–19: <http://www.philamuseum.org/collections/permanent/90035.html>.

73 BOD, Elliott 325, f. 17v (900/1494). Cf. Melville, "Ibn Ḥusām's *Ḥāvarān-Nāma*", 233 and fig. 4; SNP, <http://shahnama.caret.cam.ac.uk/new/jnama/imagepage/ceillustration:110780511>.

74 Nizami, *Khamsa*, TSMK, H. 769, f. 276v (905/1499–1500): Stchoukine, *La peinture des manuscrits de la Khamsa*, pl. LIVb (no. XXVIII on pp. 101–3). For another contemporary example, Nizami, *Khamsa*, Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, M. 468, f. 230r (894–96/1488–90), see Schmitz, *Islamic and Indian manuscripts*, Cat. 3: pl. 5, figs. 39–42.



FIGURE 9.13 *Malik decapitates the enemy in front of 'Ali. Ibn Husam, Khavaran-nama, Shiraz? 881-92/1476-87. Gulistan Palace Library, Tehran (Ms. 5750). (Anvari, Khāvarān Nāmeḥ, 30).*

secular ruler. This kind of associative linkage emerges, for example, in a painting of 'Ali rescuing Sa'd-i Vaqqas and Mir Sayyaf from the gallows (fig. 9.15).⁷⁵

From a strictly iconographical point of view, the position and stature of 'Ali in this painting strongly recall the *Shahnameh* episode of Alexander watching the execution of Darius' two assassins, who are being suspended upside

75 Anvari, *Khāvarān Nāmeḥ*, 118.



FIGURE 9.14

Tutiyanush's throat slit by order of the king of the Zangis. Nizami, Khamsa. Probably Shiraz, 905/1499–1500, Istanbul, Topkapı Sarayı, H. 769, fol. 276v

down.⁷⁶ By giving 'Ali the traditional place of a king, let alone that of Alexander, a figure admired among the Iranian people, the *Khavaran-nama* painter probably meant to create some kind of linkage, but of course elevating 'Ali's status by means of the fiery halo.⁷⁷ He likewise made significant compositional modifications inflecting the meaning of the painting: the entourage traditionally accompanying the *Shahname* kings is excluded from the *Khavaran-nama* scene, enhancing 'Ali's superior bearing. The monumental effect of 'Ali and his noble mount, both larger in scale than other personages in the image, is further achieved by placing them against a broadly rendered, brightly coloured, field, whose curved contour lies

76 MET's dispersed *Shahname*, Shawwal 887/October 1482, no. 40.38.1: McAllister, "A Shāh Nāmāh of 1482", 128; see SNP, <http://shahnama.caret.cam.ac.uk/new/jnama/card/ceillustration:633630190>. There is another Turkman copy, BNF, Suppl. persan 1280, f. 331v, with only one of the two being suspended from the gibbets upside down: <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8427188g/f670.image>.

77 Among similar events, but not often illustrated, are Ardashir watching the execution of Haftvad and his son, Shahuy, e.g. Brend & Melville, *Epic of the Persian kings*, no. 58; Ardashir watching the execution of Faramarz with another prisoner, Coomaraswamy & Goloubew, *Ars Asiatica XIII*, no. 18 and an early depiction of the same in Stchoukine, *Les peintures des manuscrits tûmûrides*, pl. xvb. For another Turkman example, Anushirvan watching the execution of Zarvan and the Jew, CBL, Pers. 158, f. 470v: see

<http://shahnama.caret.cam.ac.uk/new/jnama/card/ceillustration:1063893784>.



FIGURE 9.15 'Ali rescues Sa'd-i Vaqqas and Mir Sayyaf from the gallows. *Ibn Husam, Khavaran-nama, Shiraz? 881-92/1476-87. Gulistan Palace Library, Tehran (Ms. 5750). (Anvari, Khāvarān Nāmeḥ, 118).*

under a triangular blue piece of sky, a large golden cloud floating at the top right corner, providing an extra envelope and echo to the swing of 'Ali's golden halo.⁷⁸

78 'Ali's thematic centrality is further emphasised by pushing the figure of the enemy ruler into the upper left corner. Together with the enemy ruler, his archers and their mounts occupy an angularly framed space extending to the left margin, more or less equal in width to one column of text, so that the total painted surface is equal to five rather than four columns of text. This extension allowed the painter to divide his painted surface

One final example for the associative linkage between 'Ali and a *Shahnama* royal figure is shown in his replacing a mounted royalty faced by a person bowing before him: it is repeated in a group of three paintings where a single personage approaches 'Ali, prostrating himself in submission before his mounted figure. In one case, 'Ali is approached in this manner by Amir Zinhar Khar (fig. 9.16),⁷⁹ in a second by Abu'l-Mihjan, and in a third by Mir Sayyaf welcoming him in front of his fortress.⁸⁰

All three paintings recall the formula used since at least the early 15th century to illustrate the episode in Nizami's *Khamse* of the old woman reproaching Sultan Sanjar's policies.⁸¹

Farhad's probably deliberate desire to make this kind of spiritual/moral association is supported first in the *Khavarān-nama* painting of 'Ali miraculously lifting the gate of the pagan city of Khavar; a young person, emerging from the now open city gate prostrates himself before 'Ali in posture of deep submission (fig. 9.17).⁸²

This painting simultaneously illustrates three successive stages of the event as it is described in the upper and lower text-blocks on the page,⁸³ of which the third stage shows two youths in Muslim garb coming out of the city's gate, one of them prostrating in deep submission before 'Ali, thus in reference to the

into three vertical sections; the gallows in the centre, bracketed by a pair of two-column surfaces. The one on the left is densely packed with hostile warriors whose horses are on the move; the one on the right is entirely given to 'Ali's monumental advance towards the gallows. 'Ali thus assumes the role of a rescuer rather than an executioner, that of a victorious person who humiliates the enemy ruler, shown as if taken by surprise.

79 Anvari, *Khāvarān Nāmeḥ*, 115.

80 Ibid., 98, 103 respectively. The yellowish-brown lush vegetation, like the lush greenery, is an alternative landscape type to the barren hillsides used in most paintings, a matter to be discussed in a separate essay focused on composition and style in the *Khavarān-nama* paintings.

81 A relatively early example is TSMK, R. 862 (846/1442): Stchoukine, *La peinture des manuscrits de la Khamseh*, pl. VIII. Two late-15th-century Turkman examples are LACMA, M. 73.5.20: Pratapaditya, *The Nasli M. Heeramanek Collection*, 107, no. 196 and Khudabakhsh Library, Patna, inv. 299, f. 22r (883/1477–78): Suleimanova, "*Khamse*" *Nizami*, no. v/34.

82 Anvari, *Khāvarān Nāmeḥ*, 116.

83 The first is the battle itself; here the artist adhered to the long description in the upper text-blocks. The tightly arranged composition in the *Khavarān-nama* painting emphasises the centrality of 'Ali as he lifts the gate of Khavarān. The artist seems to have wished to design a conceptual image in which 'Ali's fiery halo and greater size would compose a scene of considerable power, or, as Basil Gray, *Persian painting*, 106, would say, "epic splendor." The second stage, which corresponds to the crucial moment in the battle, shows how 'Ali replicated his feat at Khaibar during the early wars of Islam. The implications of Ibn Husam's reference to Khaibar are discussed in Shani, "Some comments", 247–48, n. 17, fig. 9.1.



FIGURE 9.16 *Amir Zinhar Khar paying his respect to 'Ali Ibn Husam, Khavaran-nama, Shiraz? 881–92/1476–87. Gulistan Palace Library, Tehran (Ms. 5750). (Anvari, Khāvarān Nāmeḥ, 115).*

text below the painting, which describes the immediate consequence after the opening of the gate. Following the accompanying text, these youths may represent the two sons of the King of Khavar, who after 'Ali's victory “turned into believers”, as they came out of the city to welcome the conqueror.



FIGURE 9.17 *‘Ali lifting the Gate of Khavar. Ibn Husam, Khavaran-nama, Shiraz? 881–92/1476–87. Gulistan Palace Library, Tehran (Ms. 5750). (Anvari, Khāvarān Nāmeḥ, 116).*

The youth's posture of submissive prostration again recalls that of a traditional formula used to express the devotional adoration of highly spiritual personages. One such example is found in Iskandar Sultan's Anthology to illustrate a young person approaching Siyavush, who is emerging unhurt from the fire ordeal, prostrating himself before him in admiration (fig. 9.18).⁸⁴ In another early

84 Iskandar Sultan's Anthology BL, Add. 27,162, f. 295v (813–14/1410–11). Cf. Basil W. Robinson, "A survey of Persian painting", 13–83, esp. 24, fig. 8.

15th-century version of this divinely-ordained episode,⁸⁵ two men approach Siyavush; they bow down before him in deep submission, thus emphasising his spiritual/moral victory. One may speculate that Farhad's choice of the same formula was perhaps retrieved from a now lost Shirazi model-book of the *Shahnama* repertoire. This would have been done in order to emphasise, by association, the spiritual aspect of 'Ali's nature. The theme is repeated in a Turkman painting showing a prince submissively prostrating himself before a holy man (fig. 9.19).⁸⁶ That Farhad realised the associative impact that such a posture might have on the mind of the observer may finally be confirmed by two further *Khavaran-nama* paintings where prostrating figures face statues of idols (fig. 9.20).⁸⁷

It seems, then, that the *Khavaran-nama* artist of fig. 9.17 sought to design a conceptual image of 'Ali in which he would stand out as a powerful man with supernatural abilities and as a highly spiritual personage venerated by a new believer.

The notion of people prostrating themselves before 'Ali due to his supernatural and spiritual qualities seems to have been contemplated by the *Khavaran-nama* artist also when designing the painting that illustrates the episode of a ferocious lion bowing down before 'Ali in a submissive posture (fig. 9.21).⁸⁸ The lion's posture, like that of the young prince of Khavar (fig. 9.17), was evidently adapted by Farhad from the traditional formulae used in the Shiraz region for expressing devotional adoration of highly spiritual personages.⁸⁹

Throwing a particular light on 'Ali's spiritual power, the painting of fig. 9.21 is a strikingly original picture, presenting the narrative by a well-organized, straightforward and legible composition; following as closely as possible the

85 *Shahnama*, CBL, Per 114, f. 14v (800/1397): Wright, "Firdausi and more", 79 and fig. 6.2. Wright argues that it was illustrated later. Cf. a drawing in Iskandar Sultan's Anthology, BL, Add. 27,261, f. 537r, showing an individual similarly prostrating himself before a holy man: Adamova, *Mediaeval Persian painting*, 46, fig. 38.

86 Smithsonian Institution in Washington D.C, the Vever Collection s86.0061 (c. 875/1470): Lowry et al., *Annotated and illustrated checklist*, pl. 145.

87 Anvari, *Khāvarān Nāmeḥ*, 134; Grube, *Muslim miniature paintings*, 66–67 (no. 48), from the Olsen Foundation, Bridgeport.

88 Anvari, *Khāvarān Nāmeḥ*, 42.

89 It is tempting to suggest a possible iconographic connection with a much earlier drawing, perhaps early Timurid, mounted on an album page at Jean Pozzi's collection in Geneva, Inv. 1971–107/353; Robinson, *Jean Pozzi*, 110, 221, no. 21. 'Ali's face is here replaced by an inscribed disc, probably added at a later date. That Farhad may have been aware of the iconography used in the early Timurid drawing is, however, hard to substantiate.



FIGURE 9.18

Siyavush coming out of the flames. Iskandar Sultan's Miscellany, Shiraz, 813–14/1410–11 © The British Library Board, Ms. Add. 27,261, fol. 295v.



FIGURE 9.19

A prince submissively prostrating himself before a holy man. Turkman single page (Shiraz, c. 875/1470). Smithsonian Institution in Washington D.C., the Vever Collection s86.0061. Courtesy of The Smithsonian Institution in Washington D.C., Freer Gallery.

words and spirit of the text, where 'Ali is alternately named the "Lion of God" and "Haidar", it emphasises the miraculous aspect of his triumphant encounter with a lion described as a "ferocious beast" and "ferocious mountain" who, before seeing 'Ali, was *running viciously around like a leopard, clenching his teeth and paws like a file*, but once recognizing him *abandoned his thoughts*



FIGURE 9.20 *Ghattar prostrates before an idol. Ibn Husam, Khavaran-nama, Shiraz? 881-92/1476-87. Gulistan Palace Library, Tehran (Ms. 5750). (Anvari, Khāvarān Nāmeḥ, 134).*



FIGURE 9.21 *Lion bowing down before 'Ali. Ibn Husam, Khavaran-nama, Shiraz? 881-92/1476-87. Gulistan Palace Library, Tehran (Ms. 5750). (Anvari, Khavārān Nāmeḥ, 42).*

of fighting. The concept of 'Ali's exceptional status *vis-à-vis* the lion is also enhanced by the posture of the warriors on the left and their steeds, who bend their heads in admiration, echoed by the trees between the protagonists.

Originality versus Tradition

Required to illustrate a new text, Farhad was to all intents and purposes left to his own resources; when looking to illustrate themes unknown in the *Shahnama* or in any other literary genre, inventiveness took a new turn. This phenomenon is particularly apparent in the episodes involving the intervention of angels (see figs. 9.1 and 9.3), which obviously have no pictorial parallels in the accepted iconographical canon designated for the *Shahnama* and other heroic cycles.⁹⁰ In most cases, as we have seen, Farhad did find pictorial parallels in the canon of iconography designated for the *Shahnama*; the inspiration of the latter is also apparent in other themes concerning 'Ali's adventures in the far-off lands of Khavaran,⁹¹ which will be discussed in a separate essay.

Summary

There can be no doubt that the master-designer of the Turkman *Khavaran-nama* copy in Tehran (Ms. 5750) was consistently endeavouring to create an original combination of two frames of reference, similar to those used by the author, Ibn Husam. As I have tried to show throughout this essay, he drew on the *Shahnama* as a favoured model, imitating the pictorial iconography in use in the Shiraz region since the early 15th century to illustrate the *Shahnama* and other heroic cycles of the kind. At the same time, in closely following a text without precedents, he manipulated the illustrated episodes retrieved from the *Shahnama* manuscripts in order to emphasise the religious aspects of 'Ali's personage; to this end, he invented new images where 'Ali stands out as the blessed protagonist, his mythical power symbolized by a fiery halo, thus signifying the sanctity obviously lacking in the secular heroes of the *Shahnama*. This shift in emphasis was made for the purpose of heightening 'Ali's position

90 Another example for Farhad's originality appears in the episode of an angel sent by God to assist 'Ali at a crucial moment; caught empty-handed in the midst of a duel and defenseless before an enemy ready to wield a sword against him, the angel intervenes by stopping the sword from moving, Anvari, *Khāvarān Nāmeḥ*, 97.

91 E.g. the episodes of 'Ali fighting the dragon or the *dīvs*, Anvari, *Khāvarān Nāmeḥ*, 69, 70.

as a divinely-ordained warrior whose assigned role was to convert to Islam pagan peoples in far-off lands of Khavaran.

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PART 3

Textual Studies



Persian Medieval Rewriters Between Auctoritas and Authorship: The Story of Khusrau and Shirin as a Case-Study¹

Christine van Ruymbeke

There exists no English Romance, prior to the days of Chaucer, which is not a translation of some earlier French one.²

مگوی آنچه دانای پیشینه گفت
که در درن شاید دو سوراخ سفت³

*Don't repeat what the older sage has said;
It is not good to bore two holes in the pearl*



Amplifying the above statement by Walter Scott, it is possible to say that the corpus of texts in the medieval period—whether in the Eastern or the Western cultural sphere, whether in prose or in verse—is packed with “repeated characters, motifs, vocabulary, episodes and plot structures.”⁴ This is due to the fact that a literary work does not appear *ex nihilo*: its intertextual memory, relating to the subject matter and/or to the style, will be more or less prominent, depending first on the degree of the author’s conscience of the phenomenon

1 Research for this paper (specifically on the question of “re-writing”) started in 2007, during my sabbatical term as Fellow in Residence at the Columbia University Institute for Scholars in Paris. I hereby would like to thank the Institute for their invaluable help and hospitality. The present paper thoroughly revisits, corrects and enlarges a preliminary article, C. van Ruymbeke, “A Thrice-pierced pearl: Three re-writings of the Story of Khosrow and Shirin”.

2 Sir Walter Scott (ed.), *Sir Tristrem: A metrical romance of the thirteenth century by Thomas of Erceldoune*, intro., 1.

3 Nizami Ganjavi, *Sharafnama*, 8.11.

4 P. Rockwell, *Rewriting resemblance in medieval French romance*, 12.

and the acuteness of his intention and also on information available to the audience in order to decode the references and resemblances at play. A work always entertains relations with earlier writings, but, as we shall examine, this does not preclude an act of creation and a demonstration of originality by its author. And how interesting is this phenomenon when related to self-conscious rewritings! The porous border between creation and imitation enables a wide spectrum of kinds of rewritings, such as pastiche, parody or plagiarism, citation or adaptation.⁵

Thus, the apparent unity of a text covers the presence of a multiplicity of previous works that people an author's consciousness. The whole gamut, from single poetical images, to complete *baitis*, to chunks of stories, are on offer in the literary treasure-house, for the attention and plunder of ever new waves of authors. The game is, we know, to find a better way of "piercing the pearl", for the parrot's sugar to appear sweeter yet, to unveil the hidden beauty that coyly awaits manifestation, thus enhancing, abbreviating, rejecting, amplifying, re-interpreting earlier material, with an eye on a new and ever more fastidious audience. In Nizami's words above, the great poets nevertheless shun outright plagiarism and are careful when re-writing, to do so in an innovative manner. Typically, the attention of medieval literary critics has concentrated on how to legitimately borrow lines of poetry, their style and individual imagery. But this can also be applied to the style of longer poetical works, as illustrated here by the rewriting mechanisms within the third of the *masnavis* that form the object of my essay. Meanwhile, as this essay will help demonstrate, the plots and literary themes themselves are considered common property and fall outside of the corset of *sariqa* rules.⁶

The study of rewriting is often intimately intertwined with attempts to trace the presence of specific literary memories of previous texts. This we should consider problematic in its results and in the relevance of ensuing interpretations. The scope of an analysis set to chase comprehensively the origin of themes, plots, styles or images in the hope of establishing a thorough intertextual map,

5 G. Genette, *Palimpsestes. La littérature au second degré*, has attempted a classification of different kinds of rewritings and his enlightening study underpins the findings of the present essay.

6 This is similar to the attitude referenced for authors in Classical Antiquity, as argued by G.C. Fiske, *Lucilius and Horace*, esp. 39–40. On attitudes to plagiarism in the Arabo-Persian world, see J.W. Heinrichs, "sariqa". Note also that issues of intellectual property, copyright and plagiarism within a manuscript culture, which presents endemic textual variations, must take into account a blurring of the boundaries, which is not present when considering printed texts.

is frustrating: not only are textual and literary elements plucked diachronically by the medieval Persian authors in search for inspiration within their cultural tradition, but, as becomes increasingly evident, it is the universality of the literary treasure-house, transcending cultural, linguistic and religious borders, that was offered for the authors' borrowing and inspiration.⁷

As to the subject matter, our search for conscious and direct intertextual links between authors and sources is also hindered by the absence of direct filial certainty that mostly prevails. Persian poets very rarely name their sources and, in the example I will offer below, which points to undeniable similarities between a Greek story and the subject matter of one of Firdausi's micro-episodes within *dastan-i Shirin u Qubad*, there is no conclusive proof to decide whether it was perhaps an early Greek author who first borrowed a Persian motif, or whether the story was perhaps already incorporated within Firdausi's sources, or whether it was his innovative decision to include it. Furthermore, in the latter hypothesis, we are unable to conclude that Firdausi would have wished his audience to trace the Greek literary themes and to what extent we are legitimate and constructive in our attempts to uncork and interpret the authorial silence.⁸

The subject matter seems to exist in the artists' mind as a mental conception, comparable with a platonic "form"; its use is free, not subjected to any form of "copyright." Just as Nature at the moment of creation drew out archetypal models into matter, so does the poet reproduce the "shadow" of an ideal mental theme or story in the material of the poem (this shadow is what Amir Khusrau, below, terms "the bride"). The rewriter might seek to adapt and refine

7 See for example the striking similarity between the characters and the synopsis of Gurgani's *Vis u Ramin masnavi*, with the European tradition of the romance of Tristan and Isolde. D. Davis, trans. Fakhraddin Gorgani, *Vis and Ramin*, intro., pp. xxxii–xl. In this essay, I base several remarks on similarities noticeable between Classical sources and the Persian texts. This is not meant as an argument for positing a direct heredity between the two literary traditions nor does it preclude similarities with other literary traditions, but simply reflects the serendipitous limits of my present comparative scope and flair. Note that the interaction with authors from classical antiquity goes deeper than the simple phenomenon of borrowing literary data: it might also be present in the very thought-process behind this rewriting activity. To compare the attitudes towards re-writing in the Latin rhetorical tradition parallel to those practised in Medieval Persian texts, see D. Kelly, *The arts of poetry and prose*, 55 and 64–68.

8 The reason for discussing it within the present essay is because it proposes additional pointers to decode the literary significance of such a sexually charged episode within the narrative.

his forerunners' imperfect attempts,⁹ but might just as well use the subject matter to illustrate a new, different design.

Finally, the dialogue with the contemporary audience is of overwhelming importance and rewriters can also be predators in the way they play with authority and authorship: next to the appeal for a given plot or style, there is also the lure to exploit the glamour and authority of famous names and works. But a re-writing or translation (and I use the two terms as describing the process of transformation and adaptation of an older text for a new audience, with its different sociological, linguistic and cultural background) is also and foremost geared towards pleasing and addressing—meanwhile also shaping the taste of—the target-audience. And change and re-interpretation obey a purpose, which is never pure artistic merit. In André Lefevere's words: rewriting is manipulation.¹⁰ The differences in plot or style between the *auctoritas* and the rewriter (see below), may bring to light elements that allow us to understand the new work as a purely literary manipulation, a rewriting in its most narrow sense, consisting of a re-interpretation that hopes to address the taste and fashion at a given time.¹¹ This is what we can understand in the words of Amir Khusrau, the 14th-century poet, when he says that he received an injunction from the "guardian of the state" (*khazan-i daulat*) (*bait* 299) to "pour out the water which had become stale of itself" (*bait* 315) and to "make the bride emerge from the building ..." (*bait* 316).¹² In the latter image, the ideal story, the ideal concept, is like the bride who is hidden in the building of obscure words. His task is to better describe her, so that she can appear in all her glory and purity. The facts in this case, that the very subject matter of the story in question is romance and that the heroine is one of the brides *par excellence* in Persian literature, add to the appositeness of this well-trodden metaphor, which had perhaps already lost its piquancy at the time of the Indian poet.¹³

However, my analysis shows how different is the rewriting process at play in the works of the two older poets, Firdausi and Nizami: their interest is with the potential offered by the story's theme, which they use for diverging

9 Rockwell, 12–13.

10 "All rewritings reflect a certain ideology and a poetics and as such manipulate literature to function in a given society in a given way." A. Lefevere, *Translation, rewriting and the manipulation of literary fame*, vii.

11 See the development of this aspect in R. Field "Patterns of availability and demand in translations *de romanz*", 73–89.

12 Amir Khusrau, *Shirin u Khusrau*.

13 This topos is also related to the imagery of the pearl in the Nizami quotation given at the inception of the present essay: L. Anvar, "The hidden pearls of Wisdom", 66–67 discusses the web of relations in the imagery of the pearl, the bride and the poetical verses.

aims, interpreting and also subverting in their different ways. They make only cursory references to unidentified predecessors who in no way shackle their authorial freedom. Because the story's subject matter is considered common property, these two authors are able to ignore the *auctoritas* of predecessors and to make use of the story not exclusively for its superficial narrative interest and for its original resonance, but respectively as a literary signal within a historical chronicle, and as a platform for the literary illustration of a philosophical analysis.

The synopsis variants manifested between the three authors should be approached positively and constructively. They are more than anecdotal or accidental, they are the indications on how to decode these authors' intentions. Confirmed artists, all three have operated informed choices amongst the elements of the subject matter, in order to express a particular compendium of ideas, according to their authorial and dynamic conception of literary themes and styles. The confrontation of these three works is particularly rich in indications of their authors' agendas.

The present essay is thus inscribed within the study of medieval Persian rewriting and offers an analysis of the different conceptions demonstrated by three poets who "re-wrote" the story of Khusrau and Shirin.¹⁴ The *Shahnama* passage is itself a rewriting, as Firdausi indicates in the introduction to the *Dastan-i Khusrau u Shirin*. Nizami re-wrote the story, mentioning what must be Firdausi's *Shahnama*, but denying that his work is a re-writing.¹⁵ I am not aware of arguments showing that Amir Khusrau Dehlavi did or did not look back to the *Shahnama*. However, from the fact that he composed a *Khamsa*, recasting each of Nizami's *masnavis*, we may consider that he did relate to Nizami rather than Firdausi when he wrote his *Shirin u Khusrau masnavi*.¹⁶ Thus, in his case we are presented with the guarantee of filial certainty. Famous as the story's narrative may appear to be, numerous as the references to the phenomenon of its "versions" are in secondary literature, popular as the mention of the Firdausi-Nizami-Amir-Khusrau rewriting chain is, we lack a detailed comparative analysis of both the narrative and the stylistic differences between these three major literary works. Such analysis ought to lie at the basis of further

14 The Khusrau and Shirin rewritings are discussed by H.W. Duda, *Ferhad und Schirin*. He suggests (*Ferhad und Schirin*, 2) that more than 2000 works in Persian literature are related to either the Khusrau-Shirin or the Farhad-Shirin motif. See also P. Orsatti, "Khosrow-o-Shirin".

15 Nizami, *Khusrau u Shirin*, chapter XI, b. 52. See also footnote 27.

16 See especially S. Sharma, "Amir Khusraw and the genre of historical narratives in verse", 112–18.

research, which might also examine the other poems woven around the story's subject matter. This cluster of works and the topic itself have not yet received sufficient detailed attention; I hope that the structured approach proposed by the present preliminary essay may foster such further research.

My analysis hopes to show the different articulations of the rewriting purposes at the origin of each of these *masnavis*, brought to light by a brief examination of these authors' inevitable dialogue with previous texts, whether literary or historical. Within the restricted scope of the present paper, I have limited this exploration to a few points which derive from authorial decisions introducing variations within the three synopses: I focus on the function of the story's inclusion within Firdausi's *Shahnama*; on the relevance of Nizami's introduction of new characters; and on the significance of structural change combined with stylistic similarity in Amir Khusrau's version. Rather than a comparative analysis of the story-lines, or a tracing of the sources that are manifested in the changes within these texts, my questionings are designed to let emerge elements suggestive of three, very diverse, authorial designs. Each poet proposes different ways of playing with *auctoritas* and authorship, each in turn potentially becoming an *auctor* for the further authorial generation.¹⁷

I have elsewhere analysed the story proposed by Firdausi, presenting my careful close reading of the episode. This yields a picture that is surprisingly at odds with the accepted idea we have of the story.¹⁸ The *Shahnama* deals with Shirin's story only briefly, as a sub-episode within the reign of two kings, Khusrau Parviz and his heir Qubad.¹⁹ Early on in Khusrau's life, his youthful

17 I use here the term "auctor" in its accepted secular meaning deriving from Latin usage: "the juridical and the political intersect with the rhetorical and the literary in *auctoritas*, the quality by which the person who guaranteed a truth was deemed worthy of doing so." The auctor is "a writer who is regarded as a master of his subject, or as providing reliable evidence, an authority", and reference to whom will ratify a new text. See I. Ziolkovski, "Cultures of authority", 426–32. See also A. Brunn (ed.), *L'Auteur*.

18 C. van Ruymbeke, "Firdausi's Dastan-i Khusrau va Shirin: not much of a love story!", 125–47. See also Dj. Kahleghi-Motlagh, *Women in the Shahnameh*, 19–78, esp. number 16.

19 In Mohl's edition of the *Shahnama*, Khusrau Parviz's reign counts 4,201 lines (*bait*). In Khaleghi-Motlagh's edition, the reign fills 4,107 lines. The last 720 of these are gathered under the heading *Dastan-i Khusrau va Shirin* (Mohl, vv. 3481–4201; Khaleghi-Motlagh, vv. 3387–4107). However, only 152 *bait*s deal with the actual story of Shirin's recapture of the king's heart and of the various consequences this has on the Shah's life. Shirin also features prominently in the next reign, that of Khusrau's son Shiruya, now Shah Qubad, which lasts a mere seven months according to Firdausi and fills 604 lines in Mohl's edition (615 in Khaleghi-Motlagh's edition), mostly devoted to Khusrau's condemnation and

love for Shirin is mentioned. Firdausi tells us nothing about her origin, family, social background or religion. She is mentioned by name as part of the king's harem, but then disappears from sight for a long part of the king's career. As matters of state on the domestic and the international scene loom larger in his life, Khusrau forgets Shirin. He contracts an alliance of the highest political import with Maryam, the daughter of the Byzantine emperor. His second alliance is similarly political but in this case the king also feels true love for the gallant Gurdiya, the sister of his noble enemy, Bahram Chubin. Shirin briefly re-surfaces as she darkly hints at her successful rival's unclear loyalties. Gurdiya however, eventually leaves the court and Firdausi does not mention her again while the reign of Khusrau continues to unfold. It is only much later, while on a hunting expedition, that the king has the surprise of meeting Shirin again. This meeting seems to have been engineered by Shirin, as she has made careful preparations of dress and appearance. With a cunningly moving speech and a few crocodile tears, she stirs her former lover's guilt and swiftly rekindles his past passion. The now seriously besotted king marries her, acting explicitly against the shocked and adamant opposition of the nobles of Iran: Khusrau soils his kingship and his heredity with such an impure woman. Iranian kingship rocks on its basis as this inconceivable marriage threatens to break the bond between the king and his nobles.²⁰ Nevertheless, the marriage does not satisfy Shirin, who, in her scheming scramble to the top, poisons the king's respected and dignified queen, his very noble Byzantine first lady. Systematic in her cruelty, she also targets the queen's son, Shiruya, who happens to bar the way to the throne for her own sons. He is imprisoned, growing up estranged from his father, who considers him wicked and feeble-minded. Khusrau's reign, though splendid, turns the people against him and a conspiracy eventually brings Shiruya into power. Amidst revolutionary shrieks, Khusrau is awoken that night by a panicking Shirin who advises him to run and hide. The now contemptible king, acting on his wife's advice, is discovered hungry and scared, ignobly skulking in a garden. He is imprisoned, continuing to show devotion

assassination. The last 123 lines of these (Mohl, vv. 481–604; Khaleghi-Motlagh, vv. 494–615) are gathered under the heading *Dastan-i Shiruya ba Shirin, zan-i Khusrau Parviz va kushta shudan-i Shiruya*. The episode is considered anecdotal within the progression line of Sasanian history: Meisami, for example, does not mention Shirin in her description of Khusrau Parviz's reign in Firdausi's *Shahnama*: J.S. Meisami, *Persian historiography to the end of the twelfth century*, 39.

- 20 Although the reasons for this attitude are clearly stated by Firdausi, this has escaped the selective reading of some scholars: for example Duda (*Ferhad und Schirin*, 8) expresses puzzlement: "Diese Abneigung der Grossen Irans gegen Schirin wird hier durch Firdausi mit nichts motiviert."

and trust to Shirin only. Finally it is decided to have him murdered. Robbed of her protector, Shirin is now publicly accused of sorcery, one of the most serious crimes in Sasanian law, carrying the option of execution. She courageously faces her judges with a moving address and her beauty ensnares the old men of the council and especially the new king Shiruya-Qubad, her previous arch-enemy. Besotted, as was his father before him, he also proposes marriage. However, Shiruya's political situation is insecure and Shirin judges that with such a weak protector, her chances are too flimsy to last. In Firdausi's words, it is only as, literally with her back to the wall, she poisons herself in Khusrau's mausoleum that "she died and earned the world's approval."²¹

Thus, it is with disapproval—sometimes stern and austere, sometimes amused—that Firdausi depicts Shirin as a scheming, ambitious courtesan, whose origin remains obscure, whose beauty ensnares Khusrau, inspiring him to inglorious, un-kingly attitudes. We are given to see that even when she becomes one of the monarch's wives, Shirin's position remains in jeopardy for long years. Briefly referring to the Sasanian social system, Firdausi alludes to how she is only a low-class, second or third-rate wife, who is neither honoured by husband nor by society, whose sons will not attain high offices, let alone ever hope to climb on the throne and who will not inherit anything if the king pre-deceases her. Firdausi's main interest does not nestle with the romantic potential of the story, but with the legal, social and political implications of the king's love affair. I have emphasised this in the above summary, highlighting the elements that portray Shirin as a courtesan and the catastrophic results of her influence on the king.

Any attempt to analyse Firdausi's rewriting technique and attitude is doomed by our ignorance of his source(s). There is a general consensus amongst scholars to consider that he used both oral and written sources to compose the different parts of his *Shahnama*, but we do not know whether these were historical or literary texts, whether they were Persian or ultimately originated in other cultural or linguistic traditions. In the Persian sphere, we know of at least four older—now lost, but for a passage attributed to Daqiqi—verse or prose *Shahnamas*, one of which probably is the "Old Book" Firdausi repeatedly mentions.²² As to the sources used for the particular episode under scrutiny here, we only have his brief admission in the introduction of the *Dastan-i Khusrau u Shirin*, that he has culled the tale, retelling an "old story", taken from such an "old Book" (*nama-yi bastan*). He proposes to bring the story up to date. His work, "dispeller of misery", is to serve as "a memorial of the proud

21 *Dastan-i Shiruya ba Shirin*, M, v. 596; KM, v. 607: *bimurd va-z giti satayish biburd*.

22 See for example de Blois's entry on Firdausi in *Persian literature*, 107–10.

ones.”²³ Thus unable to contrast his work with this unidentified older source, we can only take his introductory remark at face value.²⁴

Whatever the contents of his unknown source might have been versus his personal input of data within the episode, the result is a mosaic that pieces together elements from several literary and historical traditions. Handicapped as we are to judge the way and technique of Firdausi’s rewriting, let us restrict our scrutiny to two elements only, which derive from established points in *Shahnama* scholarship. The structural elements of the episode as told in al-Tha’alibi’s Arabic narrative—although less detailed—agree with those in Firdausi’s story. Tha’alibi’s comments regarding Shirin however, are enthusiastically positive²⁵ and lack Firdausi’s refined, delicate psychological analysis and critique revealed by my close reading of the episode. Thus, interestingly, considering that he means “to serve the memory of the kings”, Firdausi is shown here to have operated a choice in the existing sources and to have followed a tradition that was critical of Shirin’s influence on the kings. He was not concerned with creating a dreamlike heroine, and rather than considering the romantic potential of the relationships, he focused on how infatuation jeopardised the reigns of two kings, who opposed their council of nobles and forgot their royal duty to form political alliances and to safeguard the purity of their hereditary line.

The second element I consider briefly here is the possibility that Shirin was a Christian. There certainly is a methodological problem in the inclusion of historical data within a literary analysis and I wish to sidestep the perilous debate around the historical character and personality of Shirin. Research in this direction yields frustrating and irrelevant information, beyond providing evidence that Firdausi did not feel fettered by it.²⁶ Whatever is rumoured in older

23 *Shahnama*, M, VII, vv. 3481–83; KM, VIII, vv. 3387–89. We might give it the nuance of an “antiquated, old-fashioned” book.

24 Surprisingly, he attempts to gear the audience’s reading of the episode away from tragedy, as he adds that this is a feel-good, uplifting story. The adjective he uses (*ghamgusar*) sometimes qualifies wine (Dehkhoda, XXIV, 319–20).

25 See his remark that Shirin was an extremely beautiful woman, endowed with every possible charm and till that day still cited as a paragon of beauty and perfection. Tha’alibi, *Histoire des Rois des Perses*, tr. 691–94.

26 In the particular case of the *Shahnama*, as is evident in other of its episodes, Shirin’s *dastan* cannot be trusted for historical truth. See P. Orsatti’s (“Khosrow-o-Shirin”) who brings together the information in Byzantine chronicles on the Christian characters of Shirin and of Maryam. See also Th. Nöldeke, *Geschichte der Perser und Araber zur Zeit der Sasaniden*, 282 n. 2 and 288; also A. Christensen’s unreferenced remark, *L’Iran sous les Sassanides*, 446 and 451 (though he probably means that he found the information in

sources, Firdausi remains silent on Shirin's origin and religion. This may mean that he had no knowledge of the rumour. A second and more intriguing hypothesis would be that the poet chose to suppress this information. In that case, the presentation of Shirin as lacking a family background and religious inclinations stresses and explains her character's lawlessness and non-eligibility for matrimony as well as her ensuing lack of moral elegance and noble scruples. That the Christian background was not a synonym for Firdausi of social rejection is evident from the fact that Khusrau's queen was the Christian daughter of the Byzantine emperor. Firdausi describes several times how Maryam kept her faith, nevertheless playing a positive, if back-stage, role in Khusrau's reign.²⁷

These two points already show Firdausi's authorial decision to paint Shirin as a character whose influence on two successive rulers has damaging results on kingship. The character's identity as a courtesan is given further confirmation by intertextual references stretching into other literary traditions, used either by Firdausi himself, or by the sources he culled. Whether the following example is fortuitous or can be confirmed by future research, I am nevertheless struck by the remarkable similarities between Shirin's sensational trial in front of king Qubad and the grandees, where she unveils her spectacular hair and wins the sympathy and love of her judges, with the trial of the 4th c. BC Athenian *hetaira* Phryne, who bares herself before the Areopagus, with similar results.²⁸

I analyse the above elements as showing Firdausi's unequivocal authorial decision to present the episode as that of a scandalous royal infatuation. His narrative is divorced from historical facts, which are irrelevant for his literary purpose. The story has a well-defined function within the structure of his work: Firdausi includes it in order to show the scars it left on Sasanian monarchy,

the tradition of the Arabic translations of the *Khvadaynamag*). See also below Bal'ami's description of Shirin as a "Rumi slave girl".

27 See my article "The Dastan", where I further develop this point.

28 The story is told in several classical sources. See for example Athenaeus, *The Deipnosophist*, tr. Ch. Burton Gulick, 1927, Book 13.59. (The episode is also famously illustrated in 1861 by the painter J.L. Gérôme). There are other elements which point to similarities between these two ladies, such as Phryne's involvement with the sculptor Praxiteles which seems to echo the relationship between Shirin and sculptor Farhad (see below, my comments on Nizami's version). Other literary links are noticeable in the *dastan*, such as Shirin's suicide which bears distinct echoes of Xenophon's story of Pantheia's suicide on Abradatas's body (*Cyropaedia*, Book 7). Intertextual links with Classical themes are also present elsewhere in the *Shahnama*: see Khaleghi-Motlagh, *The women in the Shahnameh*, 39–41, who notes the similarity between the episode of Rustam and Tahmina with the encounter of Heracles with the sea-nymph, as told by Herodotus.

which is useful in the progression of his narrative. Its function is to act as a literary signal warning us that the end of the dynasty approaches. And, operating as a Mirror for Princes, the *Shahnama* here flashes its wry warning to love-sick princes: it is a grim topos that the rule of women spells failed kingship and utter disaster!²⁹

Two centuries separate the *Shahnama* from Nizami's work. The date for his *Khusrau u Shirin* is 1180–81 AD. While Firdausi wrote in the *mutaqarib* meter (◡—/◡—/◡—/◡—), Nizami chose the *hazaj* meter (◡—/◡—/◡—/◡—), and told the story in about 6500 *bait*s, against a mere 275 *bait*s Firdausi specifically devoted to Shirin's interaction with the two shahs. Nizami transformed this sordid episode heralding the twilight of the Sasanian dynasty into what I here suggest is a "philosophical romance" exposing and analysing how the characters react to different kinds of love. It is not a "romance" in the sentimental sense of the word, but a complex construction proposing psychological insights meant to illustrate philosophical theories of human love.³⁰ Traditionally, the tortuous relationship between the two protagonists has held the interest of Nizami scholarship, making us inattentive to the impact of the diverse love manifestations on other, secondary characters of the story, which are indispensable to complete Nizami's analysis. Shirin, the chaste, too-perfect-to-be-true Armenian princess acts as the *anima*³¹ of the far-from-perfect Persian prince, and later shah, Khusrau. Their relationship consists in a long wait for the couple finally

29 The obvious instance is the *Siyasatnama*'s chapter warning against the influence of women: Nizam al-Mulk, *The Book of Government or Rules for Kings*, 179–87, esp. 182 which mentions Shirin (see below). This literary signal appears to be of universal applicability: compare with the comment by Laynesmith in the context of medieval England: "the sexual sins of royalty are tied with failed kingship." A comparison with medieval European laws further illuminates how Shirin's nefarious influence on the dynasty might also be illustrated by Shiruya's wish to marry one of his father's widows; J. Laynesmith, "Telling tales of adulterous queens in medieval England", 202 and 208.

30 Treatises on love, such as Ibn Sina's *Risala fi'l-ishq*, or Ahmad Ghazali's *Savanih* are instances of the interest and attempts in the medieval period to analyse, describe and categorise different manifestations of love. To the best of my knowledge, scholarship has not yet managed to trace specifically such a philosophical work which would lay at the origin of Nizami's text, though the *Savanih* might well be at the origin of *Laili u Majnun*, Nizami's next *masnavi* (See an analysis of Nizami's exploration of mystical love in this *masnavi*, in A. Seyed Gohrab, *Layli and Majnun. Love, madness and mystic longing in Nizami's epic romance*).

31 Or his "good angel", his "other half", his "light" heroine", a figure opposed to his dark side, who will guide him. See for the use of these terms in a Jungian analysis, C. Booker, *The seven basic plots*, esp. 178 and 298–300. J.C. Bürgel, "Nizami's world order", 22, also

to unite after a succession of meetings and partings. Though the poet mentions historical facts, such as Khusrau's alliance with the Byzantine emperor to fight his rival Bahram Chubin, nevertheless history's intrusion into the love interest is flimsy. Nizami axes the character of Gurdiya, but introduces important secondary characters such as Shapur, Khusrau's friend and confidant, the courtesan Shakkar, who will fascinate Khusrau for a little while, and most famously, the devoted lover Farhad, who hacks away at mount Bisutun.

As a young prince, unruly Khusrau repeatedly causes his father's wrath. His grandfather Khusrau Anushirvan appears to him in a dream and predicts that his rule will be splendid especially for the possession of four treasures: a black horse, a beautiful woman, a magnificent throne and an incomparable musician. Khusrau's confidant Shapur entertains him with the story of the beautiful Armenian Princess, Shirin. Khusrau sends Shapur to Armenia to woo Shirin in his name. This is done successfully as Shirin falls in love with the prince's portrait made by Shapur and the latter's descriptions of his master. Her disincarnate passion is so strong that she escapes from Armenia on the splendid black horse Shabdiz and heads for Iran. At the same time, accused of plotting against his father, Khusrau is exiled from court and decides to use the opportunity to travel to Armenia in search of Shirin. In a poignantly romantic and famous episode, the future lovers happen upon one another incognito during their journey. Shirin is bathing naked in a spring, Khusrau is transfixed with desire: here are two of his grandfather's promised possessions, two birds he might kill with one stone! Their reactions to the strong mutual pull of attraction contrast Khusrau's fickle, possessive and physical temperament with Shirin's steadfast and chaste love. She resists the temptation offered by this handsome stranger and runs away. When she reaches Iran, she learns that the prince is gone. Meanwhile Khusrau is welcomed by the Queen, Shirin's aunt, in Armenia and hears that the princess has fled. Both lovers finally meet as Shirin returns to Armenia. They hunt and play polo together and listen to music and verse and fall deeply in love. But pure Shirin refuses to belong physically to Khusrau before their marriage. Upon his father's death, Khusrau is recalled to Iran in haste. His position as heir is endangered by Bahram Chubin. In order to strengthen his alliance with the Byzantine emperor, Khusrau marries the latter's daughter Maryam. Shirin is shattered by the news, she leaves Armenia and goes to live in the desert in Qasr-i Shirin. In order to provide her with her daily milk-bath, Shapur enlists the help of the engineer Farhad who will build a canal. As he is introduced to Shirin, Farhad instantly and irremediably falls in

indicates that Shirin functions as the *anima rationale*, "the uppermost part of the Platonic soul"; see also J.S. Meisami, *Medieval Persian court poetry*, *passim*.

love with her. This love is doomed by their different social positions. Khusrau's jealousy is kindled, he interviews Farhad and challenges him to carve a passage through Bisutun in order to win Shirin. As Farhad is about to succeed, Khusrau, acting on the advice of his counsellors, sends him the false report of Shirin's death. In desperation, Farhad kills himself. Khusrau writes a sneering letter to Shirin. Meanwhile his Byzantine Queen dies and Shirin also sends him a bitter condolence letter. Khusrau is now ensnared by Shakkar of Isfahan, apparently a courtesan, but in fact an honest girl, who sends someone else in the night to share Khusrau's bed. Entranced by her physical beauty and her teasing, he decides to marry her, to Shirin's despair. During a hunting expedition, Khusrau comes to the foot of Shirin's castle, pleading with her to yield to him. The lady refuses and he turns away. Shapur engineers a meeting by proxy: hidden in tents, Shirin and Khusrau communicate through the songs of the two great minstrels Barbad and Nakisa. Overwhelmed by the poignancy of these songs, they finally fall into each other's arms and are married. Khusrau appears drunk in his bride's bedchamber and Shirin places her old servant in her bed. But harmony eventually seems to reign and years pass, though the king continues boisterous as before until, at the first sign of age, he is urged by Shirin to think of the future. He decides to turn to knowledge and to try to amend his ways. Meanwhile, Shiruya, Khusrau's son by the Byzantine queen Maryam, is jealous of his father and covets the beautiful Shirin. He has his father assassinated during his sleep. Khusrau truly attains greatness as, bleeding to death, he refuses to wake up Shirin who sleeps at his side. Shirin fakes meek acceptance of Shiruya's repulsive advances, she follows Khusrau's bier and stabs herself in his mausoleum.

Structurally, it is important to note that Nizami proposes the episode as a stand-alone, complete romance, ripped from the historical chronology and succession line that lie at the core of the *Shahnama*. Indeed, he emphatically mentions that he will not re-write the story told by the "older author" (by which we presume he means Firdausi), but that he will concentrate on what has been left untold, the *'ishqbazi*, the love-game.³² Rather than indicating criticism of a forerunner's treatment of the story,³³ it suggests in my analysis that Nizami

32 Nizami, *Khusrau u Shirin*, ed. Vahid Dastgirdi, *Dar Pazhuhish-i in kitab* (chapter 11. 1:52), 142: *naguftam har chi dana guft az aghaz ki farrukh nist guftan gufta-ra baz*.

33 Nizami's comment here is very different from his exasperated references in the *Sharafnama* to Firdausi's treatment of the Alexander legend, where we may consider that he truly criticises the data found in the *Shahnama*. See my forthcoming article: C. van Ruymbeke, "Nizami's giant brain tackles Nizami's *Sharaf Nama*. The authorial voice of the poet-scholar-rewriter."

refutes the notion that his work is a rewriting or that the *Shahnama* acts as *auctoritas*: he writes about a totally separate issue. The fact that the characters also appeared in the *Shahnama* is secondary to the author's aim: what the two costume-drama protagonists stood for in the common lore, their symbolic value as iconic examples of the power of lust and love, just happened to be exactly relevant to the exploration of the effects of different kinds of love, which is what Nizami wants to treat.

I argue here that labelling his *Khusrau u Shirin* as a "rewriting" of the *Shahnama* does not do justice to Nizami's sophisticated work, nor can it refer to the intention, the structure, the style or the topic of this new *masnavi* at all! The above, non-explicit mention of what is likely to be the *Shahnama* is almost fortuitous (incidentally indicating the probable fame of the episode as treated by Firdausi), and is also an example of the usual game Nizami plays with the scholarly habit of source-dropping.³⁴ If the audience trace the reference, then they will also be confronted with Nizami's game of "defamiliarisation" *avant-la-lettre* that places the ill-reputed *Shahnama* courtesan in the seat of the *anima* who conducts the lustful and immature Khusrau to a better understanding of human love.³⁵ Can we say that reading Nizami's story will gain in interest when also reading Firdausi? Not necessarily: Nizami's *masnavi* stands on its own and confrontation with the hypothetical *auctoritas* (traditionally considered to be Firdausi's text) does not produce added appreciation of its style or significance.

In the present state of research on Nizami's very complex work, the task of tracing more than a few threads of the web of intertextual references has not yet been attempted. We recognise, however, that he has taken over a number of structural elements for his heroes' interaction (such as the exchange of letters and the exchange of the heroine with another woman in the unworthy lover's bed) from another work: Gurgani's romance *Vis u Ramin*, which also explores diverse love manifestations.³⁶ At all events, the confrontation of the two story-lines above shows how he selected elements traditionally related to the story

34 C. van Ruymbeke, *Science and poetry*, 162–63.

35 Nizami's free use of the Shirin and Khusrau story might also contain indications about the vitality of his cultural surroundings. Nietzsche argues that the ascending cultures are alive and worry but little about philological scruples and what we call literal exactness. He suggests that one can judge a period's historical sense by the manner in which it translates and seeks to assimilate the bygone periods and past books. Authors sometimes simply ignore literary paternity, translating and adapting older works to fit the tastes of the new period. F. Nietzsche, *Le Gai Savoir*, 110, Aphorism 83.

36 Nizami, tr. J.C. Bürgel, *Chosrou und Schirin, Nachwort*, 331–67 and Gurgani, *Vis u Ramin*, ed. Todua, and tr. D. Davis. As mentioned for the *Shahnama* above, the references stretch

of Shirin and Khusrau and which Firdausi had chosen to discard, such as the positive depiction of Shirin that is discussed above. Amongst these elements I would like to briefly discuss his introduction of the character of Farhad.³⁷ In later works this second lover somehow steals the show away from Khusrau and will be considered Shirin's main partner. The character appears early on in Persian sources. Bal'ami refers to him as a way of identifying Shirin: "[Khusrau] had a wife named Shirin, a Rumi slave girl ... [She] was the one with whom Farhad had fallen in love and [it was] for Shirin's sake [that] he carved through Bisutun."³⁸ Nizam al-Mulk is more explicit in his expounding of the inglorious affair and takes a stance that is not dissimilar from Firdausi's sober assessment of Shirin's character. As we saw, he mentions the episode of Khusrau, Shirin and Farhad, as a counter-example of the firm and proper attitude to adopt towards women: "Since Khusrau so loved Shirin that he put the reins of fancy into her hands and did everything that she said, then inevitably she grew bold, and though she was queen to such a great king, she began to prefer Farhad."³⁹ Thus, the character of this man was already linked to Shirin's story in popular lore, forming the third element of a typical love-triangle. What is interesting is how Nizami has interpreted the character. He does not paint a feisty, lustful, hide-and-corner affair between a bored queen and a handsome menial (Nizam al-Mulk's attitude). Nor does he simply depict a desperate lover pushed to a superhuman feat by royal punishment (the possible interpretation of Bal'ami's bland reference).

The inclusion of Farhad within the synopsis is useful to illustrate a specific type of love manifestation; the spiritual, almost transcendental, attraction he operates on Shirin also boosts the dynamics of the narrative as it leads to dramatic consequences after his clash with Khusrau, illustrating a sinister aspect of the king's own type of possessive involvement with Shirin. Farhad's disincarnated love for Shirin cannot become concrete, nor reach physical fulfilment, and neither can Shirin in any way be tempted to give up her steadfast affection for Khusrau. Structurally, Nizami uses Farhad and the courtesan Shakkar

beyond the Perso-Arabic world: similarities with the Phryne story appear also in Nizami's version. See footnote 28 above.

37 Duda, *Ferhad und Shirin*, 4–12, lists other sources that mention the episode. H. Moayyad, "Farhad", 257–58, who also refers to the historical character of Farhad/Phraates, a Parthian prince, playing a minor part at the Kayanian court in the *Shahnama*. He also notes that the legend of Farhad and Shirin was known "widely to Persian poets long before Neẓāmī's time."

38 Bal'ami, *Tarjuma-yi Tarikh-i Tabari*, 221.

39 Nizam al-Mulk, *The Book of Government*, 182.

as reverse characters.⁴⁰ She—the sugar (the physical answer to Shirin's moral sweetness) belonging to the lower realm of physical sensations—contrasts with Shirin's chaste love. But it is Shakkar, rather than Shirin, whose nature most effectively responds to Khusrau's physical needs and lust. Her physical attraction will hold Khusrau's fascination for only a limited time, while Shirin's long wait and soulful devotion is meant to last till death. In an exactly inverted way, Farhad, the spiritual, selfless, mystic lover, despite his noticeable physical strength that allows him to carve through the rocks, represents the disembodied response to Khusrau's selfish sensuality. Farhad's devotion to Shirin is the attitude that best responds to her needs, and should also teach Khusrau how to win Shirin. The first encounter of the two protagonists teasingly alludes to this knot in their future relationship: chaste and spiritual Shirin is here presented in her physical nakedness to Khusrau. The overpowering physical lust which this never-to-be-forgotten first image has kindled in him will misguide him into striving for sexual fulfilment. In total contrast, for Shirin, it is the spiritual love, which has been awakened by a disincarnate painting and the oral description of Khusrau's qualities, which will direct her life and moral duties towards her beloved.

This subtle blend of physical and disincarnate love in the tortuous relationship between Khusrau and Shirin is confirmed by the fact that, again in contrast to Firdausi's account, Nizami does not mention that Shirin bears the king any sons. This stresses that for Nizami, the love affair acts on a plane beyond that of down-to-earth worries of physical love and royal heredity.

J.S. Meisami's insightful analysis of the poem centres on the Mirror for Princes dimension, showing love guiding the prince to perfection, the perfection that is indispensable for any man and even more so for a ruler, ensuring he has the protection of the kingly "farr".⁴¹ But this aspect, I submit, only represents one of the issues of the romance. The effects and ravages of different manifestations of love on the story's other characters provide equally enlightening psychological analyses and are of equal weight as the examination of Khusrau's discovery and response to diverse forms of love such as *eros*, *agape* and *philia*.

40 Nizami developed Farhad's character in more detail than he did Shakkar. However, Nizami's attitude towards mystic love in this work is ambiguous at best, as it is doomed and ends in Farhad's unfulfilled love and desperate suicide.

41 See note 32 above. Reacting to Meisami, P. Orsatti, "Le poème *Xosrow va Širin* de Nezāmi", 165, considers that rather than a Mirror for Princes "the poems by Nizami and the authors who are part of the Khusrau and Shirin tradition, refer to the individual morality of the king, considered through the important love-experience." My translation.

Nasir al-Din Abu'l-Hasan Amir Khusrau Dihlavi (d. 725/1325) is “noteworthy for the vastness of his output”, though, as Rypka muses, the figure of 400,000 verses sometimes quoted may be only legendary.⁴² His work proposes a distinctive synthesis of Muslim and Hindu cultures. But, up to now, though an eminent musician and poet in Persian and Hindavi, and remarkable as courtier and mystic alike, traditionally his significance for Persian literature has lain mostly in the fact that between 698/1298 and 701/1301, he wrote a new version of each of the *masnavis* that form Nizami’s *Khamasa*, his avowed *auctoritas*. In his case, he not only borrows the subject matter, but also designs his work as a “response”, or an “imitation” of Nizami’s poems. Thus borrowing the *hazaj* metre of Nizami’s poem, his *Shirin u Khusrau* displays on the giant level of a long *masnavi* the *istiqbal* mechanisms which are usually observed between *ghazals*.⁴³ Looking back consciously towards his predecessor’s literary style, Amir Khusrau’s re-writing aim is made obvious and claimed as such, as we may infer from his boasts and from his “replies” to Nizami’s lines. The author has increased the pace of the narrative but also the importance of dialogues, questions and answers, verbal and singing contests: they fill one fourth of the whole work.

The story opens with the death of Hurmuz heralding the start of Khusrau’s reign. His opponent Bahram Chubin forces him to flee with Shapur. On the way to Rum, Shapur tells the king about a Chinese painter met in Armenia who painted Shirin’s image on silk and this kindles Khusrau’s passion; he decides to head for Armenia. By chance, he meets Shirin, out hunting. Khusrau is invited to the queen’s castle where he and Shirin get better acquainted. Shirin demands marriage before sexual consummation. Khusrau explains

42 J. Rypka, “D. Indo Persian literature: Amir Khusrau, Najmu’d-Din Hasan Sanjari”, 257. See also S. Sharma, “Khamasa-ye Amir Khosrow”; A. Gabbay, *Islamic tolerance: Amir Khusrau and pluralism*; and A.M. Schimmel, “Amir Khosrow Dehlavi” (still important despite a now outdated bibliography). A. Piemontese has published several studies on parts of Amir Khusrau’s *Khamasa*. See for example “Sources and art of Amir Khosrou’s ‘The Alexandrine mirror’”. See also for lesser-known aspects of his poetry in Persian and Hindavi, *In the bazaar of love: The selected poems of Amir Khusrau*, tr. P. Losensky and S. Sharma; and S. Sharma, *Amir Khusrau. Poet of sultans and sufis*.

43 In Aliev’s 1961 Moscow edition, the *masnavi* counts 4124 *baits* to Nizami’s 6500. To the best of my awareness, and according to Sharma, “Khamasa-ye Amir Khosrow”, the *masnavi* has unfortunately not yet been the object of full detailed scholarly attention. I gratefully refer to P. Losensky, *Welcoming Figihani*, who has explored the mechanism of *istiqbal/javab-guyi/nazira-guyi* for post-Hafizian 16th-century *ghazals*. See also the comments on the *nazira* by Orsatti, 164 (referring to G. Aliev, *Temy i sjuzety Nizami v literaturax narodov Vostoka*, 9–12).

his political worries and plans to find help in Rum. There, he marries Maryam, and manages to defeat Bahram. Khusrau is at the pinnacle of his glory, wealth and power, but he realizes that Shirin is still in his heart. Maryam dies. Shirin and Khusrau reunite, they spend their time hunting and feasting, very much in love with each other. But Shirin remains physically distant and causes Khusrau to leave her. Shapur recommends the nice courtesan Shakkar. The king marries her and they live in joy. Shirin is understandably very upset at the king for marrying another woman. She wanders towards Bisutun, finds a canal and a noble youth working away at it with superhuman power: this is Farhad, the sculptor. Remaining anonymous, Shirin asks him to build a canal to bring milk from Armenia to her castle and she invites him to a meal. Farhad admits to being the son of the Khaqan of Chin who refused him permission to become an artist. Having relinquished his birthright, he lives his chosen life as an anonymous sculptor. The rumor of Farhad's love and Shirin's visits to the canal reach Khusrau, who has meanwhile grown tired of Shakkar. He causes Farhad's suicide and in retaliation, Shirin has Shakkar poisoned. Khusrau and Shirin remain estranged for a while, but finally reconcile and are married. Soon after, Shiruya seizes power. Khusrau is killed by a "ruffian who bore him a grudge" and Shirin commits suicide next to Khusrau's dead body.

Little remains of the historical frame of the story save the exotic flavour and period-costume attraction which the Sasanian past probably held for the 14th-century Indian author and his audience. A few brush strokes in the *aghaz-i dastan* mention the royal and political roles played by Hurmuz, Bahram Chubin and Khusrau. The poet has thoroughly re-arranged the action and the role of his characters, grouping episodes differently, discarding and adding at liberty, developing the love interest. The male character is now pro-active: it is Khusrau who falls under the spell of a painting of Shirin and who decides to start out in search of her. He also does away with the fascinating first encounter when the two heroes frustratingly pass each other incognito on the way: the heroes meet in the hunting field early on in the story. Also, Maryam's death occurs much earlier than in Nizami's version. Amir Khusrau's version emphasises the symmetry between Shakkar and Farhad. The meeting of Shirin with Farhad follows Khusrau's wedding with Shakkar and becomes a tit for tat. By giving Farhad a noble origin the poet has removed the social distinction which made a match with Shirin inconceivable. Farhad is now on the same level as Khusrau, an eminently eligible suitor, and thus far more redoubtable a competitor than in Nizami's work. Farhad's death for which Khusrau is responsible is revenged by Shakkar's death at the hand of Shirin's confidante, thus continuing the symmetry between the lovers' actions and brutally terminating the secondary love interests of each jealous hero. Shirin has tumbled from her

pedestal; she makes mistakes, revenges herself, even plots the poisoning of her rival. Finally, Shiruya is spurred only by ambition and doesn't seem particularly in love with Shirin. Thus, Khusrau's moving death and Shirin's suicide on his bier have lost much of their sensational suspense.

Amir Khusrau does not dive with Nizami into the deep waters of psychological exploration. He does not describe different forms of love with its complex gradation and mingling of physicality and spirituality as embodied in the different characters in the story. He has also shifted away from the depiction of Shirin's key role in the king's moral and spiritual development towards becoming a rightful ruler of Iran. Extending Nizami's works "in another direction", his emphasis now lies on the interplay between the characters and the development of the poignant flesh-and-blood love story.⁴⁴

I suggest here that the inversion of the names in the title of the *masnavi* reveals a typical trait of the literary technique of pastiche. Such a title advertises a dynamic relationship with the *author*: awareness of this tie is indispensable because the comparison enhances the value and interest of the new work.⁴⁵

On the level of style, his poem has a flavour of its own, the poet showing his proficiency with wordplay and, as pointed out by Sharma, he also "puns on Persian words that have Hindi homonyms."⁴⁶ There are also passages where the poet explores mimetism, offering a conscious stylistic pastiche of Nizami (he was noted for the ease with which he could emulate earlier poets' styles). As an example, here are the two opening *bait*s of the *aghaz-i dastan* in both Nizami's and Amir Khusrau's *masnavis*:

Nizami:

چنین گفت آن سخن گوی کهن زاد که بودش داستان های کهن یاد
که چون شد ماه کسری در سیاهی به هرگز داد تخت پادشاهی

Thus spoke that contour of old, who possessed the memory of ancient stories:

As Kisra's moon waned into darkness, he left to Hurmuz the imperial throne ...

44 Piemontese, "Sources and art", 40.

45 The same desire to refer back to Nizami's *auctoritas* is evident also in the other *masnavi* titles of Amir Khusrau's *Khamasa*. Genette, *Palimpsestes, passim*, examines the multiple types of parody and pastiche. His observations on the French literary corpus are very useful for the present medieval Persian case studies. See also C. Bowen, "Pastiche", 1005.

46 Sharma, "Khamasa-ye Amir Khosrow".

Amir Khusrau:

بتاریخ عجم داننده راز چنین کرد این حکایت را سر آغاز
که چون خورشید هرمز رفت در خاک کشیده اکیل خسرو سر بر افلاک

The knower of the secrets of Persia's history started this tale thus:

As Hurmuz's sun disappeared in the dust, Khusrau's star climbed the skies ...

Thus, on the level of the subject matter and narrative structure, as well as on the level of style, Nizami's shadow is long: *Shirin u Khusrau* is both imitation and transformation. Amir Khusrau bows to the *auctoritas* of his predecessor. The hypotext (Nizami's poem) is explicitly present within the new text and the contrast creates excitement. The better the hypotext was known to Amir Khusrau's contemporary audience, the more perceptible the transformations and the more manifest the dynamic tension.

Giving due awareness to the difficulty of trans-culturally capturing unstated humorous intentions, I would like nevertheless to suggest as a topic for future investigation the search for the aesthetic effects created by the pastiche technique, including that of a probable ironic dimension, within this *masnavi*. Though I am unaware that the theory and the form of pastiche is identified within medieval Persian literary studies, I read it in the practice of Amir Khusrau's use of related titles, in the changes within the narrative structure, in the personality shifts of the protagonists, in the almost mathematical arrangement of the characters within the synopsis, and in the specific stylistic pastiche of some of Nizami's lines: all these changes carry a strong element of defamiliarisation, lending oxygen to the old tale and probably creating humorous effects. Contrary to what I suggested above for Nizami's text, in this case, we must consider that Amir Khusrau's story wins in interest by being confronted with its hypotext. Awareness of the older work enhances the audacity and complexity of Amir Khusrau's authorial choices; it gives relief to his literary creation and informs our appreciation for his proficiency. And, inversely, consideration of the changes introduced may also by contrast, illuminate for us how Nizami's work was understood at the time, and ultimately, this might help us reach a fuller understanding of Nizami's work itself. At all events, and in this sense, there seems to be no problem in branding Amir Khusrau's *Shirin u Khusrau* a full and conscious rewriting of Nizami's *Khusrau u Shirin*.

I will conclude with a footnote that shows a prevailing, though probably unconscious awareness of the contrast between Nizami's and Amir Khusrau's relation with *auctoritas*. Past scholarship has treated their respective dialogues between *auctor* and younger author of the story of Shirin and Khusrau

in different ways: Nizami's style has rarely been confronted with Firdausi's. Indeed, considering their differences, this might be a pointless exercise. When the stories by these two authors are compared, this is done on the level of the plot and of the characters. In contrast, it is mostly Amir Khusrau's style that is discussed in comparison with Nizami's, not the structural differences of their versions. This might stem from the emphasis on Amir Khusrau's reputation as talented emulator of all poetical styles. (He collected five *divans* containing *qasidas* in "imitation" of Khaqani and other old masters.) Comparative approaches with Nizami's work are mostly based on sweeping criteria and brand Amir Khusrau the loser. We must question the academic validity of these judgements, based as they usually are on the subjective pleasure the critics experience when reading and comparing both literary works.⁴⁷

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47 Following N. Frye, *Fables of identity*, 8: "Casual value-judgements belong not to criticism but to the history of taste, and reflect, at best, only the social and psychological compulsions which prompted their utterance. All judgments in which the values are not based on literary experience but are sentimental or derived from religious or political prejudice may be regarded as casual. Sentimental judgments are usually based either on non-existent categories or antitheses ("Shakespeare studied life, Milton books") or on a visceral reaction to the writer's personality ..." An illustration of this attitude is found for example in Rypka, 258. He informs us that Amir Khusrau "adopts all Nizami's themes, introducing greater or lesser alterations in the events, motivations and media of expression, with a considerable though inferior erudition. The sharp outlines characteristic of Nizami give place to a certain haziness, and the latter's philosophical profundity and emphasis on social matters are absent in the work of Amir Khusrau." Rather aggravating in his patronising, he continues, "... it was just this undeniable lowering of the standard as well as the baroqueness of his style that awakened a response among his contemporaries."

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Rebels, Virtuous Adorers and Successors: The Agentic Daughters of the *Shahnama*¹

Alyssa Gabbay

Cursed Fathers, Cursed Daughters?

“Any man that has a daughter is cursed, even though he wear a crown,” declares the Turanian king Afrasiyab.² Such a statement bodes ill for the status of daughters in the *Shahnama*, which, on a superficial level, seems abject indeed. At worst deplored for their ability to bring dishonour on a family through an ill-judged romance, at best praised for fitting into a rigid mold of domestic virtue that often requires a deadly triad of beauty, obedience, and musical ability, daughters typically fall into a no-woman’s-land of being cherished by their fathers or husbands even while accounted of little worth.³ A preliminary review of their roles from a feminist perspective seems only to add credence to the renowned German scholar Theodor Nöldeke’s assertion, nearly a century ago, that the *Shahnama*’s women “practically appear only as a subject of desire or love” and are prominent only to the degree that is “absolutely necessary for the narrative.”⁴

Upon closer inspection, however, the *Shahnama*’s daughters are less abject—and less evasive—than they at first appear. Several cases indicate that the work is supportive of daughters or at least tolerates a degree of autonomy on their part, especially vis-à-vis their fathers. In keeping with efforts of recent years to explore and problematize the characterizations of women in the epic, this article seeks to reveal the complexity and agency of the *Shahnama*’s daughters—or, to put it another way, to discover the living women beneath

1 I am grateful to Furuza Abdullaeva for her comments on an earlier version of this paper, and to Selim Kuru, Danielle Bouchard, Jen Feather, and the editors of this volume.

2 See *Shahnama*, ed. Bertel’s [B], v, 23, v. 262. My translation.

3 A miller, Haftvad, had one daughter whom he loved, though he “considered daughters of no worth.” B, VII, 140, v. 511.

4 Nöldeke, *The Iranian national epic*, 88–89; also Mahmoud Omidasalar, “Notes on some women of the Shāhnāma”, 24.

the polished or nondescript surfaces.⁵ To do so, it will examine in turn three types of daughters that appear in the epic: The Defiant Daughter, The Virtuous Adorer, and The Successor, and will identify how these women fulfill the broader conceptions of agency schematised by anthropologist Saba Mahmood.⁶ She has theorized that agency can take many shapes, especially in non-liberal and pre-modern societies. The article will also address how Firdausi's characterisations align with what scholars tell us about real daughters in pre-Islamic Iran.

My goals in reading Firdausi in this manner are two-fold. The *Shahnama* is, in many ways, a blueprint for Iranian culture, a map for how Iranians perceive their past and project their future; to offer an interpretation of it that suggests an egalitarian attitude toward women is to reaffirm that value for today's Iran, much as feminist interpretations of the Qur'an have prescriptive implications for societies in which Islam plays an important role (including, of course, Iran).⁷ Second, a long-held fascination with Fatima's exalted status in Shi'ism as the daughter of the Prophet Muhammad, particularly its mystical manifestations, sparked an interest in pre-Islamic precedents. The scholar Henry Corbin has remarked upon the similarities between Shi'ite depictions of Fatima and Zoroastrian figurings of Spenta Armaiti, a female divinity.⁸ An exploration of representations of daughters in *Shahnama*, one of the foremost (albeit ahistorical) chronicles of Zoroastrian Iran, can only deepen our understanding of these parallels. It is my hope that a feminist, 21st-century reception of the *Shahnama* will result in no great damage on either side, but rather that these texts will "read" each other in ways that give rise to new and potentially valuable perspectives.

Before delving into the text, I would like to offer up some definitions of agency, that analytical concept so central to feminist studies. To do so I want to refer to two seminal works by Mahmood, both of which investigate a women's mosque movement that began in Cairo in the mid to late 1970s.⁹ As Mahmood observes, agency is typically conceptualised as a subject's freedom to act and to secure his or her own interests and agendas within a repressive and patriarchal

5 See, for example, Omidasalar, "Notes on some women"; Kathryn Johnston, "Sleeping with the enemy"; Djalal Khaleghi-Motlagh, *Die frauen im Schahname*, recently translated into English as *Women of the Shahnameh*.

6 This typology is not exhaustive; it omits, for example, the masculinized daughter identified by Omidasalar in "Notes on some women", 40–42.

7 See Nikki R. Keddie, *Women in the Middle East: Past and present*, 9–11, 19.

8 See Henry Corbin, *Corps spirituel et terre céleste : de l'Iran mazdéen à l'Iran shi'ite*; tr. Nancy Pearson as *Spiritual Body and Celestial Earth: from Mazdean Iran to Shi'ite Iran*, 51–73.

9 "Feminist theory, embodiment, and the docile agent", 202–36; and *Politics of piety: The Islamic revival and the feminist subject*.

structure. Formulated according to the values of secular humanism, which place great emphasis on individual autonomy and self-expression, agency is often evaluated in terms of *resistance* and *subversion*: that is, a subject's ability to resist or subvert the prevailing norms and to "realize [her] own interests against the weight of custom, tradition, transcendental will, or other obstacles (whether individual or collective)."¹⁰ In feminist studies, interrogations of agency naturally tend to examine how women challenge (or fail to challenge) male structures of authority or to subvert "hegemonic male cultural norms", which are almost always regarded as acting against (or in neglect of) women's interests; they evaluate how "women contribute to reproducing their own domination, and how ... they resist or subvert it."¹¹

Yet, as Mahmood argues, such a conceptualisation is useful only up to a point when examining pre-modern and "traditional" societies, for it "sharply limits our ability to understand and interrogate the lives of women whose desire, affect, and will have been shaped by non-liberal traditions."¹² With its "naturalization of freedom as a social ideal", this conception of agency projects upon subjects desires central to secular humanism—but that may not be central to *them*.¹³ These subjects may, instead, have been shaped by systems that value individual freedom less than "subordination to a transcendent will (and thus, in many instances, to male authority) ..."¹⁴ To evaluate their agency (or lack thereof) according to liberal and progressive ideals is to ignore an entire range of capacities and qualities, and, ultimately, to "reduce the heterogeneity of life to the rather flat narrative of succumbing to or resisting relations of domination."¹⁵ Moreover, such a conception fails to take into account the complexity of the role of power in creating agency and relations of subordination. A subject who acts in relation to a framework of a power structure, whether in resistance or obedience to it, is itself the product of that framework; it has a conditional relationship with those operations constituting power that typical notions of agency ignore or downplay. As Mahmood writes:

If we recognize that the desire for freedom from, or subversion of, norms is not an innate desire that motivates all beings at all times, but is also profoundly mediated by cultural and historical conditions, then the

¹⁰ Mahmood, *Politics*, 8.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 8, 6.

¹² Mahmood, "Feminist theory", 203.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 206.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 2–3.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 204, 222.

question arises: how do we analyze operations of power that construct different kinds of bodies, knowledges, and subjectivities whose trajectories do not follow the entelechy of liberatory politics?¹⁶

The solution arrived at by Mahmood is to broaden the concept of agency to include not only “resistance to relations of domination, but as a capacity for action that specific relations of *subordination* create and enable” (emphasis added).¹⁷ Agentival capacity, then, “is entailed not only in those acts that resist norms but also in the multiple ways in which one *inhabits* norms.”¹⁸ It is seen as the ability to effect change in the world and in oneself, but the manner in which both that change and the capacity to effect it is evaluated is not “fixed in advance, but must emerge through an analysis of the particular concepts that enable specific modes of being, responsibility, and effectivity.”¹⁹ Importantly, such a view allows the potential for qualities normally viewed as un-agentival, such as docility, to be included within the purview of agency.

Given such a definition, I would like to propose that one element of female agency that can be profitably explored in the *Shahnama* is that of descent and inheritance.²⁰ As the historian Nikki Keddie has observed, gender discrimination is often closely linked to the concept of patrilineal descent. The fact that, in many pre-modern societies, daughters did not “perpetuate their natal family line or add to its property”, and that family continuity was seen as passing only through the agnatic (male) line, contributed heavily to a preference for sons, as well as a disinclination to allow daughters to inherit.²¹ A converse understanding of daughters as transmitting their lineage (and thereby inheriting) adds to a sense of agency and empowerment for them, even if they do not act in traditionally agentival ways.

A related feature of agency that will be of interest in considering the *Shahnama* is the ability of daughters to succeed their fathers to positions of power. Again, such an act may not involve rebellion, especially if it is a father who promotes his daughter as his successor; but to inhabit these norms clearly requires the “considerable investment, struggle, and achievement ...”

16 Mahmood, *Politics*, 14.

17 Ibid., 18.

18 Ibid., 15.

19 Ibid., 14–15.

20 Ibid., 14–15.

21 See Keddie, *Women in the Middle East*, 47. The above-cited passage refers to Jews and Muslims in Egypt during the 10th to 13th centuries. For much broader (albeit flawed) discussion of the topic, see Germaine Tillon, *Le harem et les cousins*, 28–29.

that Mahmood sets forth as prerequisites for agency.²² Here again the subject is clearly shaped by the operations of power into which she was born and is subordinate to them, just as would be any male. Such an understanding will, I think, be useful in assessing female characters who acted within the confines of highly rigid and hierarchical systems—but who nevertheless acted.

The Defiant Daughter

As suggested above, one of the most well-accepted definitions of agency is rebellion against repressive patriarchal systems to exert one's own will. Let us begin conservatively, then, by examining cases of defiant daughters in the *Shahnama*. As Kathryn Johnston observes in her perceptive article, "Sleeping with the enemy: Exogamous marriage in the *Shahnameh* of Ferdowsi", this type appears rather frequently in the epic. Normally the events follow a similar pattern: a non-Iranian noblewoman falls in love with an Iranian hero, sometimes without setting eyes upon him. She lures him to her, and they spend the night together, effectively marrying. Her father learns about their alliance later. Sometimes he becomes reconciled to the idea; in other instances, he opposes it violently. Occasionally, the pact made between the daughter and her new husband seals the father's death-warrant.

Prominent examples of defiant daughters include Rudaba, daughter of Mihrab, the king of Kabul, who falls in love with Zal, son of Sam; and Manizha, daughter of the Turanian king Afrasiyab. It is Manizha's seduction of the Iranian Bizhan, son of Giv, that provides a platform for Afrasiyab's exposition on the infamy of daughters, cited earlier. Manizha sides with her husband against her father, whose machinations result in his defeat at the hands of the hero Rustam.

Yet another example of a defiant daughter is Sudaba, the daughter of the ruler of Hamavaran, a country close to Syria. She supports her new husband, the Iranian king Kay Kavus, in a conflict involving her father, who—having been extremely reluctant to give her up—attacks Kavus and recaptures his daughter. Similarly, Malika, daughter of the Arab chieftain Ta'ir and his Persian captive, Nusha, falls in love with the Persian hero, Shapur Zu'l-Aktaf—who is, incidentally, her kin—and betrays her father's fortress to him and his men, an act that, as with that of Manizha, results in her father's defeat.²³

²² Mahmood, "Feminist theory", 220.

²³ B, VII, 220–26. It is fascinating to compare these stories to similar, later ones in the Turkish tradition in which Christian daughters betray their father's fortresses to Muslim warriors. See for example Ayşe Ezgi Dikici, "Painting an icon of the ideal Gâzi."

Sepinud, the daughter of the king of India, Shangal, presents a complicated mix of wifely docility and daughterly defiance in a story involving the Sasanian king Bahram Gur, who is notable for the many women he espouses during his reign. In this case, Bahram travels to India disguised as an envoy who has come to claim tribute and obedience to Iran. His strength and ability to perform dangerous feats so impress Shangal that the monarch decides to marry one of his daughters to him, rationalizing that such an alliance will neutralize the hero's power and ensure he remains in India. Of the three daughters offered, Bahram chooses one named Sepinud; she is "lovely as the spring" and "compounded of modesty and grace, good sense and desire", "elegant as a cypress, and pure as a candle that burns without smoke."²⁴

Some time after their marriage, the king informs his wife, who has discovered his true identity, that he plans to return to Iran, and invites her to accompany him. If she does so, he promises, she will be crowned queen and her father will "kneel before [her] throne."²⁵ Responding with proper docility that "the best woman is the one who makes her husband smile continually; my soul will deserve your contempt if it deviates from your intentions", Sepinud helps Bahram devise a plan to escape.²⁶ Messengers report their departure to Shangal, who reacts with pursuit. Confronting his daughter on the banks of a river, he assails her for her betrayal:²⁷

بدختر چنین گفت کای بد نژاد	که چون تو ز تخم بزرگان مباد
تو با این فریبنده مرد دلیر	زدریا گذشتی بکردار شیر
که بی آگهی من بایران شوی	ز مینوی خرم بویران شوی
ببینی کنون زخم ژوپین من	چو ناگاه رفتی ز بالین من

May no king ever have a child like you! / This man deceived you, and away you flew

*To cross this river without telling me /—You're leaving our celestial sanctuary
For what? A ruined and impoverished land! / You'll know the force of this
spear in my hand*

*If you think you can simply leave my side / And without warning, run away
and hide!*²⁸

24 Davis, *Stories*, III, 294; B, VII, 429, vv. 2187–2188.

25 Davis, *Stories*, III, 295; B, VII, 432, v. 2250.

26 Davis, *Stories*, III, 295; B, VII, 433, vv. 2252–2253.

27 B, VII, 436, vv. 2314–2317.

28 Davis, *Stories*, III, 296.

Shangal likewise reproaches Bahram for his disloyalty, unworthy of one whom he treated like a son and “preferred ... to my children and to all my family.” Bahram responds by revealing his identity and declaring that Shangal will now be his father and his daughter the “eastern candle flame/Who crowns all other women with her fame.”²⁹ The astonished Shangal embraces Bahram and the two kings reconcile, promising eternal loyalty and friendship.

Rather than disappearing from the narrative, however, as Nöldeke's schemata might have predicted, Sepinud continues to maintain an important (if reticent) position within it. After bidding farewell to his daughter, Shangal returns to his home and Sepinud and Bahram proceed to Iran, where the king sets the country in order and presents his Indian wife to his priests, who “taught her the principles of the [Zoroastrian] faith and bathed her in pure water, so that she was cleansed of all corruption, dust, and dirt.”³⁰ After some time, intrigued by his daughter's reports of the country, Shangal pays a visit to Iran, where the court's beauty and luxury astonish him. His encounter with Sepinud is noteworthy:³¹

نشسته بآرام با فرو تاج	چو دخترش را دید بر تخت عاج
رخانرا برخسار او بنهاد	بیامد پدر بر سرش بوسه داد
همان بر پدر دختر ماه روی	پدر زار بگریست از مهر او
ازان کاخ و ایوان و جای نشست	همی دست بر سود شنگل بدست
برستی ز کاخ بت آرای زشت	سپینود را گفت اینت بهشت

*He saw his daughter, gloriously gowned / Calm on her ivory throne, and
nobly crowned*

*He kissed her forehead then, and bent to place / His face against her radi-
ant, moonlike face*

*They wept in one another's arms, and he / Caressed her hands with his
continually*

*He said, 'You live in paradise, my dear; / The palace that you left, compared
to here,*

*Is ugliness itself—a noisome lair, / Impoverished, idolatrous, and bare!*³²

29 Ibid., III, 297; B, VII, 437, v. 2338.

30 Davis, *Stories*, III, 297–98; B, VII, 441, vv. 2400–2401.

31 B, VII, 444, vv. 2440–2444.

32 Davis, *Stories*, III, 299–300.

So impressed is he by Iran's superiority that Shangal writes a proclamation committing his country, treasures, crown, throne and armies to Bahram Gur after his death. He entrusts this will "written in Devanagari script on silk", to Sepinud.³³

It is noteworthy that in most of these cases, the daughter is treated sympathetically in her defiance of her father, and that the epic supports her decision to choose her own spouse (especially when he is an Iranian). Such support of rebellion against patriarchal structures parallels that of defiant sons who come into conflict with their fathers, noted previously by Dick Davis.³⁴ Here, it may reflect a certain freedom allowed to daughters in choice of marriage partners that was present in pre-Islamic Iran, as will be discussed at greater length below; in any event, it suggests at least some degree of agency in these daughters, even if they do end up obeying their husbands rather than their fathers.

Another noteworthy element that emerges from these examples is a daughter's ability to carry on her natal bloodline, which points to a form of bilineal descent or inheritance. Daughters are clearly portrayed as representing, maintaining, and transmitting their parents' (and, in particular, their fathers') lineages. When Zal, a Persian hero, marries Rudaba, a "descendant of the evil Zahhak", his father wonders "How can two lineages as disparate as fire and water be mingled?" The marriage nonetheless produces Rustam, Iran's greatest hero, who, as Johnston argues, manifests characteristics of both his father's and mother's lineages.³⁵ Likewise, Afrasiyab's attitude toward two of his daughters' marriages to Iranians reflects an acute awareness that each partner represents his and her respective lineage and that the results may be, literally, mixed. In contemplating a proposed marriage of his daughter, Farangis, to Siyavush, son of the Iranian king Kay Kavus, Afrasiyab bypasses consideration of the children themselves in favour of their sires, pondering: "A child that comes from Kavus and Afrasiyab will mingle fire and flood; how can I know whether he will look kindly on Turan?"³⁶ His fears are well-founded, for Kay Khusrau, the

33 Davis, *Stories*, III, 301; B, VII, 446, v. 2466.

34 Davis, *Stories*, II, 9–10. He observes that in the Bizhan–Manizha story, the conflict is transformed from that of father-son to father-daughter. Indeed, heroism in women and in men is similarly constructed in the *Shahnama* as a willingness to rebel against an unjust ruler, even when to do so poses the risk of danger or loss. Likewise, women and men are similarly expected to show obedience to a just ruler and (if not mistreated) to play their defined roles within a hierarchical society.

35 Johnston, "Sleeping with the enemy", 37.

36 Davis, *Stories*, II, 55.

son of Siyavush and Farangis, does make war on his country. Such is the case despite Siyavush temporary identification as a Turanian.

Malika's case presents a striking example of a daughter's ability to carry on her bloodline, for her mother, Nusha, was the daughter of the Persian Narsi. Malika herself bears a close resemblance to her maternal grandfather:³⁷

ز طایریکی دخترش آمد چو ماه تو گفتی که نرسیست با تاج و گاه
پدر مالکه نام کردش چو دید که دخترش همی مملکت را سزید

*A beautiful daughter was born to [Nusha] from Ta'ir / Who closely resembled Narsi, with his crown and throne
When her father saw she deserved to rule the state / He named her Malika (Queen)*

Before discovering Bahram Gur's identity, Shangal regards his daughter and new son-in-law as belonging to his family and to his country: the marriage has created an alliance between Iran and India, but the bride's family predominates in a manner that suggests matrilineal descent. Even after the couple moves to Iran and Sepinud is "cleansed" of her idolatrous ways, however, the family ties are maintained or even strengthened. Shangal visits Iran and clearly continues to regard his daughter as a part of his family, just as Bahram Gur is his son; Bahram likewise confirms that Shangal is his father. The promised inheritance defies norms in preferring a daughter and her husband over a natal son, but conforms to Zoroastrian mores in which, as will be seen below, a daughter could "inherit the family- or hearth-fire from her father. If she married, her husband would assume responsibility for the fire."³⁸ As with other royal women in the epic, Sepinud, "the eastern candle flame", retains her ethnic identity and bloodline despite the religious conversion she has undergone, and she is capable of inheriting, along with her husband, her father's property, when ordinarily it might have gone to a son.

Similarly, but in a less positive fashion, Sudaba maintains her bloodline and identity even after marrying Kay Kavus. When she tries to entangle her husband's son, Siyavush, in a seductive trap, the prince reflects thoughtfully that

37 B, VII, 221, vv. 35–36. My translation. Dick Davis, in whose version the captive is named Nobahar rather than Nusha, gives the following prose translation: "For a year Nobahar lived, wretched and heartsick, with Tayer and then gave birth to his daughter, a lovely child who was the image of her grandfather, King Nersi, and indeed she seemed so worthy to rule that her father named her Malekeh [Queen]." Davis, *Stories*, 111, 180.

38 Jenny Rose, "Three queens, two wives, and a goddess", 35.

Sudaba was her father's daughter and "like him, full of wiles and hatred for the Persian people"; she becomes, of course, one of the chief villains of the epic.³⁹ It can be argued, in fact, that rebellious daughters are treated sympathetically only when they defy their fathers for the sake of Iranians and "right religion"; once they turn their backs on these causes, they become disgraced, worthy of contempt and, like other disobedient women in the epic, come to ignominious ends.⁴⁰ Even so, the degree to which the epic gives credence to these daughters' activity attests to their ability not only to charm and beguile, but also to transmit, restore, or transform their father's fortunes.

The Virtuous Adorer

An archetype that presents a more compelling challenge to ideals of autonomy and agency is that of the obedient daughter, or, as I have termed her here, the Virtuous Adorer. Characterized by her seeming submission and pliancy to the will of her father, this type encapsulates the virtues associated with pre-Islamic Zoroastrian women along with none of their evils, and thus teeters dangerously on the brink of nonentity-hood. Again, several examples of this type emerge amid stories of the marital escapades of Bahram Gur, the prodigiously polygamous king. In one prominent episode, the king is on a hunting expedition when he learns of a rich jeweler who has a beautiful harp-playing daughter. His interest sparked, Bahram Gur presents himself one night at the jeweler's home, saying he is a companion to the king whose horse has been lamed. The jeweler, Mahyar, receives him warmly; both drink a great deal of wine.

In the course of their revels, Bahram, while still concealing his identity, discloses that sounds of the harp drew him to the home. The jeweler proudly identifies the musician as his daughter, Arzu, and orders her to play for the honored guest. She performs with great grace and much adulation of both her father and the guest. First, she praises her father:⁴¹

پدر را چنین گفت کای ماهیار چو سرو سہی بر لب جویبار
چو کافور کردہ سر مشکبوی زبان گرمگوی و دل آزم جوی

39 Davis, *Stories*, II, 20–21.

40 See Omidasalar, "Notes on some women", 40; Alyssa Gabbay, "Love gone wrong, then right again", 682. Johnston also suggests this point in "Sleeping with the enemy", 39.

41 B, VII, 352, vv. 830–833.

همیشه بداندیشست آزرده باد بدانش روان تو پرورده باد
توی چون فریدون آزاده خوی منم چون پرستار نام آرزوی

*Mahyar, a noble cypress tree that grows / Beside a bank where limpid water flows,
Your musky hair's grown camphor-white, your mind / Is gentle and your voice is warm and kind—
May wisdom nourish your good soul, and may / Confusion sweep your enemies away!
You are like Feraydun, that noble king / Who valued freedom above everything.
And your obedient daughter Arzu / Lives only to devote her life to you.⁴²*

Then she turns to the guest and heaps praise upon him, declaring that he resembles no one more than king Bahram, and valorizing his skill in battle and his powerful appearance. The song ends with a paean to the guest that promises nothing short of total submission: "May Arzu live all her years for you/The dust beneath your feet in all you do!"⁴³

Unsurprisingly after this display, the king falls in love with Arzu and asks to marry her that very night. Mahyar, still unaware of his guest's identity, reacts with great caution to Bahram's request. First, he instructs both his daughter and Bahram to examine each other closely to ensure that their potential mates are pleasing. Despite their mutual affirmations, the jeweler attempts to persuade Bahram to wait until morning to finalize the marriage, maintaining that asking for a woman's hand at night, especially when one is drunk, is unwise. Bahram dismisses the jeweler's forebodings, but Mahyar continues to drag his feet, again asking his daughter whether she is certain that her suitor pleases her. When Arzu responds by instructing her father to marry them immediately and to entrust the deed to God, the jeweler finally permits the wedding to take place.

The following day, upon discovering the identity of his visitor, Mahyar cringes with fear and embarrassment for having failed to treat the sovereign with the appropriate deference. But Bahram Gur—a just king—takes no offense and is, rather, happy and pleased with his host and with Arzu, who, as his queen, is seated on a golden throne and bidden to sing in praise of her husband. The episode concludes when Arzu is escorted to the king's harem—which by now

42 Davis, *Stories*, III, 261; B, VII, 352, vv. 830–833.

43 Davis, *Stories*, III, 261; B, VII, 353, v. 844.

numbers nearly a thousand women—and Bahram Gur makes “his way to his jasmine-scented beloved.”⁴⁴

At first, Arzu appears to be the epitome of un-agentival submission. Her father’s cherishing of her, though genuine, seems to derive largely from her obedience to him, her beauty, and her skill in performing music. She professes abject humility before both him and the king. Yet, like other daughters, she is allowed freedom of choice in her marriage. In this case, she is given the opportunity to examine her potential husband multiple times and to refuse him if he does not please her; and, perhaps more importantly, the ability to defy what may be interpreted as her father’s subtle pressure *not* to marry Bahram, but instead to remain with him! Hedged about by the protective measures of a hierarchical universe whose guiding principle is justice, Arzu is able to preserve her docile, obedient demeanor while nevertheless acting with agency—which, in this case, translates into a clear sense of her own desires and the ability to pursue them without retribution.

The Successor

Up to this point we have examined daughters who occupy a rather receding role in the public sphere, if any at all. Another type of daughter who appears in the epic is the Successor: a daughter who is seen by her royal father or others around him as suitable to rule after him. As will be seen, such examples are highly significant in their implications for female agency.

One of the most striking (and, for contemporary readers, embarrassing) examples in the *Shahnama* of a daughter who succeeds her father is that of the Humay, the semi-legendary Kayanid ruler. According to the epic, the ruler Bahman Ardashir has both a son, Sasan, and a daughter, Humay, the latter described as “virtuous, educated, and prudent.” The father sleeps with the daughter, according (as Firdausi delicately puts it) to Pahlavi custom, and Humay becomes pregnant. Six months pass, during which the king falls ill and realizes that he is going to die. Ordering Humay and his counselors before him, he seats her upon the throne, saying,

همان لشکر و گنج با ارجمند	سپر دم بدو تاج و تخت بلند
هم انکس کرو زاید اندر نهان	ولی عهد من او بود در جهان
ورا باشد این تاج و تخت پدر	اگر دختر آید برش گر پسر

44 Davis, *Stories*, III, 265; B, VII, 359, v. 951.

*I have bequeathed to her my crown and high throne / The army, and the great treasure
And my future legatee / Will be that same soul who is born from her
Whether it be a son or a daughter / To that heir will be given the crown and throne of the father.*⁴⁵

Upon hearing these words, Sasan—who under ordinary circumstances would have succeeded his father—departs in a huff for other lands. Bahman dies of his illness and in accordance with his wishes Humay accedes to the throne. She rules effectively for thirty-two years, surpassing her father in wisdom and justice and causing the whole earth to flourish. Desiring to maintain the throne for herself, she conceals the birth of her son, later known as Darab, who is raised by strangers. Eventually, however, his identity is revealed and he does succeed Humay, just as Bahman had commanded.

The episode, despite its unsavory aspects, nevertheless reveals the epic's strong emphasis on lineage and the tendency among royalty to embrace endogamy as a means of preserving its purity, for by sleeping with his daughter, Ardashir stands a better chance of reproducing himself than if he had allowed his son to succeed him. In this example, however, the king not only sees his female offspring as capable of perpetuating his lineage, but also of showing forth some of the virtues enshrined within it, including typically "unfeminine" characteristics such as wisdom, judgment and ability to rule. Such is the implication of his appointing of Humay and her unborn child—*whether male or female*—as his successor. Blood trumps gender in this case. Bahman's judgment proves correct, for Humay carries out her kingly duties admirably. Despite its morally ambiguous elements (for us), then, the episode sets forth a more positive view of women than the stereotypical one in which they appear as dangerous, reason-deficient beings fit to serve only in the private sphere.

The accessions of Buran and Azarmdukht, two Sasanian princesses who followed their father, Khusrau Parviz II to the throne, accomplish a similar goal via less controversial means. Buran and Azarmdukht, both offspring of Khusrau by his wife Maryam (the daughter of the Roman Emperor Maurice), were two of the only remaining descendants of the royal line after their brother, Kavad II, massacred seventeen brothers and an eighteenth was assassinated by a usurper. Royal guards loyal to the dynasty succeeded in overthrowing the

45 B, VI, 352, vv. 173–175. My translation.

usurper and enthroning Buran; she seems to have ruled for sixteen or seventeen months (629–630) before dying, upon which she was replaced by her sister.⁴⁶

The account of these latter ruling daughters is highly significant for the Islamic era, for it was Buran's accession to the throne, which coincided with the Arab invasion of Iran, that precipitated the Prophet's reported remark, "Those who entrust their affairs to a woman will never know prosperity."⁴⁷ Though Firdausi begins the account of Buran's rule by quoting an aphorism similar to that of the Prophet—when a woman becomes king, matters go badly", it appears to be largely formulaic or obligatory, for he later contradicts that message by depicting Buran as a wise, openhanded, and just sovereign who ruled with great gentleness, and who, upon her death, took away with her a good name.⁴⁸ Likewise, Azarmdukht, shown as ruling only four months, is portrayed as capable, punishing the disloyal with hanging and behaving with great kindness toward the loyal. As Emrani writes, the decision to enthrone these two women acknowledges not only their ability to (potentially) produce a heir who will continue the father's lineage, but also to rule themselves and, indeed, capacity to be "considered as the rightful holder of *xwarrah*", or "the divine glory of kingship" which is bestowed upon rulers by a deity and passes to his descendants.⁴⁹

It is significant that the enthronement of these women constituted, as Emrani proposes, a "shift and an adjustment, not a revolution" of "existing parameters in the support of the central objective of preserving the Sasanian imperial ideology and the monarchy." The norms within which the women lived were sufficiently flexible to provide the means for their accessions.

46 Rose, "Three queens", 44.

47 Bukhari, LIHIVIII, no. 219. Much debate has circulated around the validity and interpretation of this oft-cited hadith. See Mernissi, *L'harem politique*, 3, 49–50, 61; also Denise Spellberg, *Politics, gender, and the Islamic past*, 139.

48 B, IX, 305, vv. 1, 23. The historian Tabari (d. 922 or 923) eulogized Buran as "a queen who made her people happy. He states that on the day of her coronation, Buran pledged to encourage pious conduct and justice and that she treated her subjects well, spreading justice, minting coins and repairing stone and wooden bridges. She excused people from payment of outstanding taxes and wrote open letters to them in which she explained how she wished to do well by them." Rose, "Three queens", 44. Magi also lauded her as an "upholder of the tenets stipulated by Zoroastrianism." Choksy, *Evil, good, and gender*, 85.

49 See Haleh Emrani, "Like father, like daughter: Late Sasanian imperial ideology and the rise of Bōrān to power", 5, 1. <https://www.sasanika.org/wp-content/uploads/e-sasanika5-Emrani.pdf> (accessed 21 September 2017).

In these cases, the power dynamics of Sasanian Iran enabled female agentival capacity without the need for rebellion or subversion.⁵⁰

Pre-Islamic Precedents

Such is not to imply that pre-Islamic Iran offered a perfect gender egalitarianism; in fact, it seems certain that women's roles were sharply proscribed. Zoroastrian texts convey an image of the ideal woman—whether divine or human—as lovely, maternal, domestic, submissive, and amiable. The “holy female spirits who maintained religious order” tended to be associated with “domesticity, maternity, submissiveness, and piety ...;” their roles normally involve serving the higher male deities.⁵¹ Spenta Armaiti, “the earth divinity and allegorical mother of humanity,” “represents the pious, devoted female who will serve god and man as wife and mother working to ensure that cosmic order is upheld.”⁵² The symbol of “chaste love,” she came to represent both the “personified divine companion of Ahura Mazda [the supreme deity] and the mother of creation.”⁵³ Likewise, Aredwi [Arwīsūr Anahīd] Sura Anahita, “the Mazdean divinity of water, fertility, and authority” is usually depicted as a ‘beautiful, strong, and noble maiden ...’ who was closely associated with purity and chastity.⁵⁴

Like their cosmological counterparts, women were largely encouraged to occupy domestic roles in Zoroastrian texts. Women—“weak willed, easily tempted, and led astray by the devil’s horde”—could be good, but in order to be so they had to conform closely to the standards set by the feminine good spirits, which entailed being pious, devoted, and obedient to the dominant males in their lives.⁵⁵ Women who stepped out of the domestic sphere to take on public roles could be associated with the “evil female spirits who spread disorder”; inevitably, disasters “were thought to occur when the female gender

50 It is interesting to compare their cases, as presented by Emrani, with that of the Egyptian female ruler, Hatshepsut (r. 1508–1458 BC), and with a later Muslim female ruler, Raziya. All to some extent drew on masculine attire and iconography as a means of acquiring legitimacy. See Gay Robins, *Women in ancient Egypt*, 51; Gabbay, “In reality a man”, 48–49, 51–55.

51 Jamsheed K. Choksy, *Evil, good, and gender*, 103.

52 *Ibid.*, 35.

53 *Ibid.*, 45.

54 Rose, “Three queens”, 38; Choksy, *Evil, good, and gender*, 48.

55 Choksy, *Evil, good, and gender*, 52.

was permitted to exercise authority and make decisions ...”⁵⁶ The ideal role of woman as submissive and servile emerges in an early Zoroastrian text which has been identified as a possible wedding sermon delivered by Zoroaster for his daughter, Pouruchista, to a seer. It states, “Indeed, I shall unite in marriage her among you, she who will serve father, husband, pastor, and family.”⁵⁷

In actuality, a more ambiguous picture emerges. Despite their secondary status in Achaemenid times (circa 550–300 B.C.), women did hold some rights and play “a wide variety of roles”—“[t]heir presence is attested in royal settings as queens, other noblewomen, concubines, and slaves, in familial settings as wives, daughters, and household workers and in a wide range of workplaces—from the market to building site.”⁵⁸ Under Achaemenid civil law, women “could own movable and immovable property, and exchange, bequeath, inherit, lease, sell, and trade such items ... They could enter into contracts and attest contractual documents with their own seals ... Yet, simultaneously, they seem to have been regarded under both state laws and religious codes as the property of men.”⁵⁹

Royal daughters seemed to hold a special status, if only as transmitters of a lineage. Atossa, daughter of Cyrus II, was consanguineously married to her brothers—a practice the Achaemenids may have acquired from the Elamites “as a means of consolidating power”; she later became the wife of Darius I and the mother of Xerxes I.⁶⁰ As Choksy says, “... it appears that her sociopolitical authority derived from her familial, royal heritage which resulted in her transmitting political authority from her father ... to the men who married her.”⁶¹

Secondary status for women persisted during the Sasanian period (224–651 A.D.) “[A]ccording to tradition a woman was always under the tutelage of a male—at first, her father or brother, later her husband. The male head of the house ... held the power in the family and his daughter and wife were subordinate to him.”⁶² Ideally a woman found contentment in domesticity rather than seeking “public recognition, secular authority, or clerical positions.”⁶³ The

56 Ibid., 103, 54.

57 Yasna 53:4; cited in Choksy, *Evil, good, and gender*, 117.

58 Choksy, *Evil, good, and gender*, 75.

59 Ibid., 75.

60 Ibid., 91.

61 Ibid., 76. Compare with Tillion's depiction of the widow/niece/sister-in-law of the Pharaoh Tutankhamun, Ankhsenpaton, who had the “power to transmit sovereignty, but not to exercise it”. Tillion, *Le harem et les cousins*, 66.

62 Rose, “Three queens”, 32. Judaism, Christianity, and forms of paganism also existed.

63 Choksy, *Evil, good, and gender*, 92.

ideal woman combined amiability toward men, submissiveness, a sense of “each gender’s religiously-assigned role and purpose in the world”, and beauty.⁶⁴

Yet, as in the Achaemenid period, Sasanian women did possess some rights and responsibilities and had some freedom of activity outside the home. Some girls at least were taught to play music, for one text describes the best musician as a “beautiful girl who plays the chang in the harem and whose voice is high and melodious.”⁶⁵ Evidence exists that some women had knowledge of legal matters and were “recognized as being legally competent.”⁶⁶ A Sasanian juridical text, the 7th-century *Madayan i Hazar Dadestan* (Book of a Thousand Judgments) shows that freeborn women “could enter into contractual agreements and commercial transactions, they had access to inheritance, they had to fulfill debts, and they were held responsible for violations of law.” Because their legal capacity was not equivalent to that of males, however, their “public actions, such as trading, often would have been mediated by adult males with whom the women had statutory relationships ...”⁶⁷

Normally, a girl was married off at the age of fifteen to a husband chosen by her father. Yet, a “daughter could declare to her father that she did not want to marry, and could not be compelled to do so. She was not punished in any way for this decision, nor did she lose her allowance.”⁶⁸ She could also enter into an unapproved relationship without necessarily losing her inheritance, a reality which may help explain the *Shahnama*’s tempered attitude toward defiant daughters.⁶⁹

Most importantly for the purposes of this study, there was also the sense of daughter as successor or heir, a person capable of continuing the family line and transmitting her father’s lineage to the next generation. This concept seems to have been expressed in a number of ways. We have already noted the successions that took place on the royal level: Buran and Azarmdukht.

This practice was consecrated as well among commoners, where Sasanian daughters appear to have been able to act as legal successors to their fathers. As Rose writes, in the event of a father and his sons dying without other offspring, there are cases in which “the married daughter inherits the brother’s portion as a guardian [*stūrīh*]. In this case, she is referred to specifically as ‘heiress’ [*āyōkēn*], in that she undertakes to produce an heir and namesake for

64 Ibid. 56.

65 Rose, “Three queens”, 37.

66 Ibid., 36–37.

67 Choksy, *Evil, good, and gender*, 88.

68 Rose, “Three queens”, 33.

69 Ibid., 33–34.

the deceased.”⁷⁰ Likewise, “[a]n unmarried daughter could be a hereditary successor to her father alongside her brother, but usually inherited about half as much, unless her father had specified otherwise, which might be the case if she had cared for him in his old age.”⁷¹ A daughter could also, as noted above, “inherit the family- or hearth-fire from her father. If she married, her husband would assume responsibility for the fire.”⁷²

The concept of the *ayoken* is a complicated one, denoting as it does a “form of marriage by proxy or substitution” which takes place for the purpose of carrying on (or guarding) a family’s lineage.⁷³ It is initially fulfilled by a man’s son; in the absence of a son it may pass to his widow, adopted son, designated person, brother, eldest daughter, unmarried daughter, or sister, in that order.⁷⁴ Essentially placing the successor in the role of the deceased man’s main wife, it is a form of *xwedodah* (consanguineous marriage, incest) which appears to have been “adopted by Iranian commoners as a legal means ... of retaining assets within familial units,” although naturally (especially after the man’s death!) consummation of a marriage would not take place.⁷⁵ In fact, despite many references to consanguineous marriage in “the writings of late Sasanian and early post-Sasanian magi”, “there is no evidence that it ever became a popular form of consummated marriage in Iran under Zoroastrian or Muslim rule ...” although it was indeed practised among royalty.⁷⁶

In any event, the concept of *ayoken* attaches more value to daughters than they might ordinarily possess, and arguably more than they later had in many Islamic societies, where inheritance and successorship was regularly denied or dismissed.⁷⁷ A prominent exception is, of course, the Shi’i conception of Fatima, who acted as *ayoken* for her father, the Prophet Muhammad, by perpetuating his lineage through her sons Hasan and Husain, a rare example of matrilineal descent in Islam, and one that may have led to more egalitarian inheritance practices in Shi’ism versus Sunnism.⁷⁸ Shi’ism accords Fatima an even greater rank by representing her, in some cases, as the mother of the

70 Rose, “Three queens”, 35.

71 Ibid.

72 Ibid.

73 Mansur Shaki, “Ayökēn.”

74 Ibid.

75 Choksy, *Evil, good, and gender*, 91.

76 Ibid., 91.

77 See Keddie, *Women in the Middle East*, 40, 43.

78 Ibid., 28, 210; Moojan Momen, “Women in Shi’ism.”

imamate and even of prophecy; it acknowledges a ruling position as an arbiter on the Day of Judgment.⁷⁹

It has sometimes been argued that Zoroastrian influence upon Islam contributed to the development of Shi'ism.⁸⁰ The material presented above may appear to suggest such a conclusion. In fact, scholars have sometimes attributed similarities between Fatima and Zoroastrian female entities such as Spenta Armaiti and Anahita to syncretism.⁸¹ Yet I prefer to take the path trodden by Corbin, and to speak of parallels without claiming influence or historical causality, which too often do not admit of proof. As Corbin writes on this subject, "To pass from one octave to a higher octave is not the same as to pass from one date in time to another, but is a progression to a height or pitch that is qualitatively different. All the elements are changed, yet the form of the melody is the same. Something in the nature of harmonic perception is needed in order to perceive a world of many dimensions."⁸² To force the similarities into a mold of historical causality and progression is less productive, I believe, than perceiving the same melody in multiple manifestations.

Firdausi's Daughter?

Given the above information, it is tempting to speculate about Firdausi's own attitudes towards daughters. Was he merely reflecting his sources in writing of independent-minded women such as Rudaba, or did he feel that daughters had the right to marry whom they liked, to carry on their fathers' lineages and succeed them to positions of power? As a learned Muslim, he would certainly have been aware of the Qur'anic dispensations on matters of inheritance (all too often ignored in practice), as well as of Fatima's exalted stature within Shi'ism. And as the father of a daughter, he doubtless formed his own opinions on these subjects. Indeed, as with everything else connected with the poet, a certain mythology has grown up around Firdausi's daughter.⁸³ Some say he wrote the *Shahnama* in order to provide her with a dowry. It is told of her that, after her father's death, she refused to accept a plentiful sum of money offered by the sultan which was designed to make up for the paltry amount initially given, and that the money was used instead to build a caravanserai—a move

79 See L. Vecchia Vaglieri, "Fātima."

80 See, for example, <http://zoreled.org/historyzorislamiciran.aspx> (accessed January 1, 2012).

81 See Choksy, *Evil, good, and gender*, 99.

82 Corbin, *Corps spirituel et terre celeste*, xiv.

83 See E.G. Browne, *A literary history of Persia*, II, 38–39.

that no doubt helped contribute to characterizations of her as “high-spirited.” Regrettably, the opportunity to assess fully how Firdausi’s personal opinions about daughters may have informed the way that he wrote about them vanished with the poet himself a millennium ago. What is available to us now is only a shape-shifting text, readers in far-flung lands, and readings.

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PART 4

Art History and Manuscript Studies



Zahhak from Cambridge and Bahram Gur from Geneva: Two Unpublished Lustre Tiles with *Shahnama* Verses

*Firuz Melville*¹

Two particular stories from Firdausi's *Shahnama* were among the most popular to be found on ceramics and metalwork from the 12th until the 14th centuries, and represented in both pictorial and inscribed versions, as has been noticed by several scholars.² This paper attempts to explain this popularity by introducing two unpublished tiles with inscriptions from the two stories.

The two narratives concern the legendary Arab dragon king Zahhak and the Iranian king Faridun (both characters and their names of Avestan origin) and the Sasanian king Bahram Gur and his exploits with the female sex.

Both tiles in question, although rather different, were produced in an obscure period for the history of the *Shahnama* text. At least one obviously originated from the architectural complex of Takht-i Sulaiman, or was produced in the style identified with Takht-i Sulaiman, although this is not the only place where similar tiles have been found with inscriptions in both Arabic and Persian.³

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- 1 In memoriam Leon Tigranovich Gyuzalyan. My thanks go to Oliver Watson, Sheila Blair, Marianne Shreve Simpson and Tomoko Masuya for their helpful guidance during my writing this paper. I am particularly grateful to the editor CPM for his immense efforts to reduce my originally enormous paper.
 - 2 I.A. Orbeli, *Bahram-Gur i Azade*; R. Ettinghausen, "Bahram Gur's hunting feats or the problem of identification"; Shreve Simpson, "Narrative allusion and metaphor in the decoration of medieval Islamic objects"; M.V. Fontana, "La Leggenda di Bahram Gur e Azada"; W.L. Hanaway, "Bahrām V Gōr in Persian legend and literature"; T. Masuya, *The Ilkhanid phase of Takht-i Sulayman*; A. Qoreshi, "Bahram's feats of hunting dexterity as illustrated in Firdausi's *Shahnama*, Nizami's *Haft Paikar* and Amir Khusrau's *Hasht Bihisht*".
 - 3 L.T. Gyuzalyan and M.M. Dyakonov, "Nadpisi na zvezdchatyh izraztsah XIII v. s gorodhischa Novaya Nisa"; L.T. Gyuzalyan, "Frizovye izraztsy XIII v. s poeticheskimi fragmentami"; "Otryvok iz Shahname na glinyanyh izdeliyah XIII–XIV vv."; "Otryvok iz Shahname na glinyanyh izdeliyah XIII–XIV vv."; "Dva otryvka iz Nizami na izraztsah XII I XIV vv."; "Nadpis na lyustrovom izraztse 624/1227 I iz Kievskogo museya"; "Neskolko poeticheskikh tekstov na veraminskih izraztsah ermitazha"; "Persidskie poeticheskie otryvki na srednevekovyh

Ilkhanid tiles of this type have been studied since the publications by R. Ettinghausen and L.T. Gyuzalyan, to whom I owe my own excitement at the chance to identify these *Shahnama* inscriptions on media other than paper. Other crucial contributions have been made by O. Watson and T. Masuya; on the tile classification and reading of the inscriptions by A. Ghouchani, and specifically on the tiles with *Shahnama* texts by A.S. Melikian-Chirvani.⁴

The Tale of Two Tiles

In summer 2012 I happened to see a new acquisition of the Geneva part of Deniz and Pierre Darier's collection of Islamic ceramics, which came through the Mansour Gallery in London. It was a rather classical Takht-i Sulaiman-style tile in excellent condition. Its rectangular surface richly decorated with floral design shaping the centre and the palmette border, depicted two turquoise parrots opening their wings and inviting the viewer to read the inscription under the curvy belt on which they stood symmetrically on both sides of the tile. The intriguing words in turquoise over a brown lustre background in a clear Persian *naskh* script and the hint of the *mutaqarib* metre of the fragmented verse, suggested a possible *Shahnama* origin.

Several weeks later Rebecca Bridgman, who had been cataloguing the Islamic ceramics at the Fitzwilliam Museum, suggested seeing the collection before she left Cambridge to take up a new job as curator of Islamic and South Asian Arts at the Birmingham Museum, and I eagerly took this opportunity. In a long glass cabinet in the storage she showed me a large lustre tile with the fragment of a Persian

glinyanyh izdeliyah i ih istoriko-literaturnaya tsennost'; "Nadpis na lyustrovom kuvshine 1179 g. iz Britanskogo muzeya"; "Tri predmeta so stikhami Jami"; "Persidskoe stikhotvorenje na mednom tazike i byvshey kollektsii D.S. Reysa"; "Nadpisi na mestnoy keramike iz Oren-Kala"; "Iranskie srednevekovye izraztsy na kupolnom barabane khrama bogoroditsy v Egvarde"; "Chetyre dvustishiya na iranskom izraztse XIII v." Cf. the map Yves Porter showed during his third Yarshater lecture on 15 January 2013, summing up the locations where these tiles have been excavated and in many cases originally produced.

- 4 O. Watson, *Persian lustre ware*, 122–49, cf. a tile with a similar trilobed arch, 135, fig. 112; T. Masuya, "The Ilkhanid phase of Takht-i Sulayman"; A. Ghouchani, *Inscriptions on Nishabur pottery*; T. Masuya, "Il-Khanid courtly life", 99, figs. 111, 112, for similar tiles. For the latest bibliography see S. Blair, "A brief biography of Abu Zayd", 155–76 and A. Froom, *Persian ceramics: from collections of the Asian Art Museum*; A.S. Melikian-Chirvani, *Les frises du Shāh Nāme dans l'architecture iranienne sous les Ilkhān*, 17–20, 93–95 and 98, figs. 1–5 and especially fig. 12 but with a different inscription, a type that is derived from the Takht-i Sulaiman model and probably of a similar date to those from the palace. For Ettinghausen, see also below, n. 32

inscription inside a blue curvy belt surrounded by a dark terracotta arabesque floral ornament. The inscription seemed to have a *mutaqarib* metre. The tile arrived at the Museum in 1924 but had never been on public display. Museum records showed no evidence that there had been any attempt to read the inscription.

The coincidence of seeing the two tiles almost simultaneously in Geneva and Cambridge recalled my undergraduate years at Leningrad University when we had classes at the Hermitage Museum with Leon Tigranovich Gyuzalyan. Once a week our small group of students would cross the River Neva for the Winter Palace, where Gyuzalyan would be waiting for us. Then he would take us to the top floor (always closed to the public) and read the inscriptions on tiles, plates and jars, which looked in the beginning completely non-comprehensible. Some of them were from the *Shahnama*. It was a text he had been working on for many years, being involved in the Bertel's critical edition project. I do not know which love came first to Gyuzalyan, the *Shahnama* or the artefacts and particularly early Iranian ceramics with poetic inscriptions, but I recall him saying that for a *Shahnama* student finding an inscription from the poem on some media other than paper is a great and exciting opportunity because this discovery can shed light on the most obscure period of the life of the text or texts of the *Shahnama*, not necessarily written by Firdausi.

The Fitzwilliam Museum Tile

Tile description. Lustre ware; mould made fritware (stonepaste) frieze tile, C.43–1924, height 29.2 cm, width 30 cm, depth 1.8 cm, weight 2.722 kg, Iran, second half of the 13th century (see fig. 12.1).⁵ On the upper edge a wide symmetrical frieze of dotted floral and herbal ornament is reserved on a lustred ground. Painted in turquoise across the centre of the tile, a trilobed arch contains an inscription reserved on a background containing dotted trefoils. In the spandrels and below the arch, a very decorative bouquet of the same big flowers with blue centres is painted on a background of scrolls. Along the bottom edge a narrow chevron pattern is painted; turquoise is spotted at points on the surface; the lustre decoration and glaze spill over onto the edges.⁶

Oliver Watson (pers. comm.) suggested that the tile does not seem to have originated from the Takht-i Sulaiman complex; the main problem with this

5 Bridgman's attribution is ca. 1280–ca. 1289 (<http://www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/id/object/17497> <http://www-cm.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/explorer/index.php?qu=islamic%20AND%20pottery&oid=1749>).

6 Ibid.



FIGURE 12.1
Tile, C.43–1924, Iran,
Kashan, 13th century
 © Fitzwilliam Museum,
 Cambridge.

attribution is that the upper border has not been registered on any of the known tiles from this site. This means that either its origin is from a different palace, or it was made using an unknown mould for Takht-i Sulaiman and thus is the only surviving one of this type. In this case its date could be identified as 1265–82.⁷

Provenance. The tile was presented to the Fitzwilliam Museum by Mrs E.L. Calverley in December 1924.⁸ Her late husband was a son of Major-General Edmond Leveson (1864–1940), son of Isabella Mary Selwyn, daughter of Sir John Thomas Selwyn, the sixth Baronet of Down Hall, Essex. Edmund Leveson Calverley⁹ married Sybil Maitland Selwyn, eldest daughter of Osbert Selwyn, F.R.S. of Hawksfold, Fernhurst, Sussex and they had five children. One of them, Second Lieutenant of the Royal Air Force Osbert Leveson Calverley, was born in England and studied at Appleby College, Oakville and the Royal Military College of Canada. He went to Britain in January 1915 and on 12 July 1918 was

7 Charles Melville, "From Adam to Abaqa, part II", 17, suggests that the construction of the palace started under Hülegü, compared with the previous attribution to the reign of his son Abaqa.

8 Cpt and Mrs Calverley are both mentioned in the provenance of the Iznik tile C.41–1924: June 1919/given 1924, which was originally on loan: its label contains an inscription: 'loaned by Cpt Hugh Calverley by Eabon Pl S.W.' (crossed through). The label of the Persian tile also has the date when Cpt Hugh Calverley gave it on loan to the Fitzwilliam: in June 1919.

9 His brother, John Selwyn Calverley in 1888 married Sybil Disraeli, daughter of Ralph d'Israeli, brother of Benjamin Disraeli, the British Prime Minister (1874–80).



FIGURE 12.2

Tile, 544–1900, Myers Collection © Victoria & Albert Museum, London.

killed at the age of 19 in flying accident. His grave is at the Cambridge City Cemetery (unit: 124th Sqdn). It was their eldest son Hugh Selwyn (b. 1894 in Canada) who offered the family artefacts to the Fitzwilliam. Most likely this happened during their family visit to Cambridge and the Fitzwilliam Museum when they came to see the grave of Osbert Calverley. The donor, Hugh Calverley, during his military career participated in several campaigns of WWI in the East, including the battles at the Dardanelles and Gallipoli in 1915, and Egypt and Palestine in 1916.¹⁰ This could be the reason why he developed such an interest in Islamic ceramics. On 13 January 1915, when he was still on a training course, he wrote to his mother, mentioning Goodman's book on Persian pottery.¹¹ He graduated from Trinity College, Toronto in 1916 and immediately afterwards joined his father in the Gallipoli front. It is most likely that he acquired the tiles, especially the *iznik* ones, during his stay in Turkey.¹²

There are several tiles known of such a kind (with a trilobed arch and decoration on the upper frieze).¹³ One of them with very similar dimensions (29.8 cm × 30.5 cm) is now at the Victoria and Albert Museum (fig. 12.2),¹⁴ with an inscription in a very *Shahnama*-like style and published by Melikian-Chirvani with a *Shahnama* identification.¹⁵

10 W.A. Young & A.H. Kirkwood, *War memorial volume of Trinity College*, 122–24.

11 Hugh S. Calvalry, A man at war: <http://images.oakville.halinet.on.ca/66/Exhibit/54>.

12 <http://speeches.empireclub.org/66/Exhibit/1>; <http://everitas.rmclub.ca/?p=45844>; <http://www.twgpp.org/information.php?id=592986>.

13 Watson, *Persian lustre ware*, 135, fig. 112; V. Porter, *Islamic tiles*, 32–61, especially 37, fig. 22; E. Grube, "Some lustre painted tiles from Kashan, of the 13th and early 14th centuries", 167–74; cf. 170, fig. 12, for a tile with similar tri-lobed arch. Masuya, *Ilkhanid courtly life*, 99, figs. 111, 112; *eadem*. "Persian tiles on European walls: collecting Ilkhanid tiles in nineteenth-century Europe", 39–54. R. Bridgman, <http://www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/projects/lustreware/gallery/index.html>.

14 No 544-1900, bought from the Myers Collection; Melikian-Chirvani, *Les frises*, fig. 12.

15 This is obviously not from the Qur'an as suggested on its webpage: <http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O202786/tile/>. In his reading of the inscription, Melikian-Chirvani, *Les frises du Shāh Nāme*, 20, refers to the story of Khusrau Parviz and the Khatun of Chin, and the

دو نرگس دژم...
دو رخسار تابان بکردار ماه

du nargis-i duzham du rukhsar-i taban be kirda[r-i mah]

... two cruel daffodils two shining cheeks [like the Moon].

Inscription on the Fitzwilliam tile. The tile contains second part of the second *misra'* of the *bait* with the following incipit:

فریدون فرخ فرشته نبود
به عود و به عنبر سرشته نبود

*Glorious Faridun was not an angel
He was not made of aloe-wood mixed with amber*

and the first part of the first *misra'* of the next *bait*:

به داد و دهش یافت آن نیکویی
تو داد و دهش کن فریدون تویی

*Be just and generous, and you will be [like] Faridun.
He achieved good fortune by justice and generosity*

Thus the actual text on the tile is as follows:

... رشته نبود به داد و دهش...

...was not made/ by justice and generosity ...

These two *bait*s are present in standard editions of the Firdausi's *Shahnama* at the end of the chapter describing Faridun capturing Zakhak and bringing him to Mount Damavand.¹⁶

edition by Bertel's [B], IX, 145, v. 2293, which contains the end of the second *misra'*, but is followed by a different verse 2294; cf. Mohl [M], VII, 2133, vv. 2374–75.

¹⁶ *Shahnama*, M, I, 57, vv. 532–33, ed. Khaleghi-Motlagh [KM], I, 85, vv. 489–90. The fact that this inscription and the one on the Darier tile are both as in the standard editions of

The Story of Faridun and Zakhak

Legendary Iranian king Jamshid achieved so much for himself and his country due to his talents as a person and a ruler that at some stage he considered himself equal to God. This caused his tragic and most inhuman end: having lost his *farr* (divine charisma) and hence divine protection, he was sawn in half by the order of his successor—an Arab prince Zakhak, who had assassinated his father, having sold his soul to Devil. In fact, both Jamshid and Zakhak diverted from the path of noble behaviour and brought the country to the brink of catastrophe. It should, however, be mentioned that Zakhak did not conquer Iran but, compared with other foreign rulers, was invited to rule Iran by Jamshid's courtiers. Having agreed a pact with the Devil once, Zakhak was approached by him again: this time in the shape of a handsome youth who showed him the devilish art of gourmet cuisine, having raised the king's expectations from fried egg to lamb stew. When the king sank into the sin of gluttony and, overwhelmed with praise for the pseudo-chef, offered to reward him, the Devil humbly asked the king's permission to kiss his shoulders. Zakhak permitted it and once the Devil touched his shoulders with his lips two black snakes sprang out. Now the Devil turned himself to a physician and offered his cure. He explained to the terrified king that the only way to keep the snakes happy was to feed them every day with the brains of two young Iranians. By the end of Zakhak's thousand-year reign there was no family that had not suffered the loss of a young man sacrificed for the sake of the snakes of the human dragon.

The blacksmith Kava lost all his sons in this manner, until when his last son was taken he started a revolt, supported by Faridun. Faridun, a unique descendant of the Iranian kings, due to the cow Barmaya had miraculously survived the attempts of Zakhak, who like Herod,¹⁷ saw him in a dream and tried to destroy him in his childhood. Having seized Zakhak in his palace, Faridun married both his wives, who were the daughters of Jamshid, and took Zakhak to Mount Damavand to bind him there forever. The image of Zakhak coupled with that of Faridun has always been perceived as a symbol of crime and punishment, and the inevitability of punishment however long it is delayed.

the text make it unnecessary to enter into a discussion about the state of the text in its obscure life before the first manuscript witness (currently 1217).

- 17 The story of the massacre of all newly-born babies sanctioned by the king, who was warned by predictions about his recently born rival, was also in circulation in the neighbouring cultural traditions (Jewish and Christian). For example, the same narrative was applied not only to the birth of Jesus but also to John the Baptist.



FIGURE 12.3
 Tile © Deniz and Pierre Darier
 Collection, Geneva.

The Darier Collection Tile

Tile description. Lustre ware; mould made fritware (stonepaste) frieze tile, coated in a white glaze painted in light and dark blue and lustre, 26.5 cm × 28 cm × 3.5 cm, Kashan, Takht-i Sulaiman Palace complex, ca. 1265–82, acquired from the Mansour Gallery, London in 2012 (fig. 12.3). On the upper edge a wide symmetrical frieze of dotted floral and herbal ornament is reserved on a lustrous ground. Painted in turquoise across the centre of the tile, a trilobed arch contains an inscription reserved on a background containing dotted trefoils. In the spandrels and below the arch, a very decorative bouquet of the same big flowers with blue centres is painted on a background of scrolls. Along the bottom edge a narrow chevron pattern is painted; turquoise is spotted at points on the surface; the decoration and glaze spill over onto the edges.

The tile is typical of the so-called Kashan ‘Bird and Flower’ group,¹⁸ which were once used to decorate the Takht-i Sulaiman palace complex,¹⁹ the main characteristic decorative elements of which are two symmetrically painted birds,²⁰ most likely parrots or pheasants, which sit on both sides of the rosette-

18 Groups of about a hundred tiles made from different moulds were identified by the Deutsches Archäologisches Institut between 1959 and 1978, during the excavations at Takht-i Sulaiman; Masuya, ‘Persian tiles on European walls’, 47.

19 Melikian-Chirvani, *Les frises du Shāh Nāme*, 17–20, 93–95 and 98, fig. 1–5 and especially 12.

20 Melikian-Chirvani, *ibid.*, published the tiles with three distinctively different kinds of birds: phoenixes/peacocks (96, figs. 7–8), parrots (figs. 9–11), and ducks (99–100, figs.



FIGURE 12.4
 Tile, 1958–47 © Fogg Museum of
 Art, Harvard Art Museums/Arthur
 M. Sackler Museum, Boston.

like curved belt dividing the space into two parts: above and below the inscription. The birds with their wings open and their heads turned aside stand on the belt with the inscription inside and point to it with one of their wings. Peter Morgan suggests the birds on the tiles of this group symbolise a human soul, a Sufi idea later fully shaped in ‘Attar’s poem.²¹

One of the closest to the Darier tile is the one from the Fogg Museum of Art at Harvard (fig. 12.4).²² The dimensions of the Harvard tile are similar to those of the Fitzwilliam one (26 cm × 26.5 × 2 cm). It is also square, with birds and flowers in relief, containing an inscriptional frieze. It is moulded and painted in cobalt-blue and turquoise on a white ground under a transparent glaze and lustre painted. The inscription on the Fogg Museum tile reads:

دو رخسار تابان بکردار ماه

... [du nargis-i duzham] du rukhsar-i taban ba kirdar-i mah ...

14–16). These tiles give a good background for comparison according to the same type of birds, composition, and the shape of their frieze decoration.

21 Peter Morgan, “Il-Khanids, iv. Ceramics”, *Elr online*, December 2004.

22 Harvard Art Museums/Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Department of Islamic & Later Indian Art, Division of Asian and Mediterranean Art (1958–47). It was presented to the Museum by John Goelet in 1958. See Melikian-Chirvani, *Les frises*, fig. 11.

... [two cruel daffodils [of your eyes]], Two shining [white-skin] cheeks, like the Moon ...

This is the same line that was inscribed on the tile mentioned above from the Victoria and Albert Museum, which this time Melikian-Chirvani discusses in connection with the story of Afrasiyab telling Garsivaz of his nightmare, though noting that the exact verse itself is not found in Firdausi's *Shahnama*.²³

Inscription on the Darier tile. The inscription, taken from the *Shahnama*, is the second *misra* of the *bait* with the following incipit:

میانت چو غروست و بالا چو سرو
نخرا مان شده سرو همچون تذرو

miyan-at chu gharv-ast-u bala chu sarv
kharaman shuda sarv hamchu tazarv

Your waist is like a reed, your top is like a cypress tree –
Graciously moving cypress tree [colourful] like a pheasant.

The verse occurs in most manuscripts, including the earliest ones, and is present in standard editions of the poem.²⁴ It is from the story of Bahram Gur and Arzu.

The Story of Bahram Gur and Arzu

It starts with the description of yet another hunt, when the king in front of a thousand people of his entourage pierces a lioness with one arrow from chest to hip. To celebrate this performance he and his courtiers have a ride across the fields and meadows, scaring the flocks of sheep and their shepherds, who all flee except their headman. He explains to Bahram Gur that the flocks and everything else in the area belong to a very rich *dihqan* and merchant called Mahyar, whose business is jewellery. However, his most valuable treasure is not gold and diamonds but his daughter Arzu ('Desire'): she is not only a peerless

23 *Shahnama*, M, II, 416, vv. 772–73. Cf. Melikian-Chirvani, *Les frises*, 18–19 and 84, where he lists both the Fogg and the V&A tiles under variants of the *Shahnama*.

24 Sasanians, Chapter on Bahram Gur (M, v, 1675, v. 1022; B, VII, 353, v. 839). The nearest heading in the Dabir-Siyaqi edition is 'Bahram Gur kills the lions and visits the house of the jewel merchant and seeks his daughter' (*kushtan-i Bahram shiran-ra va raftan-ash ba khana-yi gauhar-furush va khwastan-i dukhtar-i u*), DS, IV, 1882, and see v. 1021.

beauty but a talented musician. This news immediately inflames Bahram's desire to meet the dihqan's daughter, and the king decides to visit Mahyar in his house incognito. Bahram dresses up like an ordinary knight and sets off in the direction towards the jeweller's house. The king leaves, but his faithful *mobad* (Zoroastrian priest and advisor) Ruzbih addresses the courtiers with quite a didactic speech about the dangers of excessive sexual activities. He starts by saying: "The king is already outside the merchant's house and I know what is going to happen next. Next he will marry his daughter. He will put a golden crown on her head and bring her to his *shabistan* (harem), of which he already has a hundred. There he keeps 930 wives, on whom he spends so much money that an income tax from the whole Rumi colony is hardly enough to cover one month's costs of their maintenance." Ruzbih criticises the king for wasting state money and his precious energy on women, with whom a man should not have sex more often than once a month, otherwise he will face a serious danger of early ageing.

When the *mobad* finishes his speech the king reaches the jeweller's house, from where he could hear the most beautiful music played with *chang* (harp). He immediately knocks on the door, although it is already quite late and dark. When asked who he is and what he needs, he answers that he is Gushasp, one of the king's knights, his horse has hurt its leg and he needs a place for the night. He is let in, and the host offers him some wine, which was served by his daughter Arzu. Despite Bahram pretending to be a knight from the king's entourage, Arzu keeps calling him king Bahram and offers to sing a song in his honour. The prosperity of the host makes the king feel very proud of himself, as he thinks that all other citizens in his country live in the same luxury as Mahyar due to his wise rule. Arzu sings in praise of Bahram, comparing his slim and sportive figure with a reed and a cypress tree, his strength with an elephant and camel, his healthy looking face, lips and cheeks with roses, pomegranates and tulips. The text on the tile contains a fragment of her song.

This song and wine produced such a strong impression on Bahram that he immediately proposed to Arzu, asking her father's permission. Mahyar asks Arzu several times, suggesting they postpone the answer until morning as they were all too drunk for any serious decisions. Nevertheless, both Arzu and Bahram insisted, both saying 'yes'. Mahyar agrees, and they all go to bed. Before falling asleep Bahram hangs his whip on the jeweller's gates.

The next morning his entourage enters the town, trying to find the king. Having seen the whip they all stand outside and shout the greetings and praises. After very persistent attempts of his servant to explain the nature of the noise outside his house, Mahyar realises that his daughter was right, and the night guest was not the champion Gushasp, who is still sleeping in his

house, but the king himself and bitterly regrets that he was so reluctant to give him his daughter the night before. He immediately organises the most splendid wedding party and on the next morning Bahram leaves for good, taking the new wife to one of his harems.

Several sources mention that Bahram was a great music lover and promoted musicians to higher rank and encouraged public concerts by bringing thousands of Indian minstrels (*luris*, sometimes identified as gypsies) into Iran to amuse his subjects.²⁵ Being a patron of music, poetry and sports, he was spending his days hunting, feasting and marrying various women, sometimes several sisters at a time, a Sasanian practice particularly condemned in Islam.

Having lived with the Arabs for many years in his youth and in close contact with the Greeks and Romans through his friendship with Byzantine Emperors Arcadius and his son, Theodosius II (408–450), Bahram was learned in Arabic, Greek and Roman arts and languages and excelled in archery and hunting. His name 'Gur' became a pun with two meanings: 'gazelle' and 'grave'. For example, for Nizami in his *Haft paikar* (Seven beauties), or *Bahramnama* (Book of Bahram, 1197), Bahram's reign is a spectacular waste of opportunities: instead of using his position as ruler of a great empire and applying his education and skills to the cultivation of his country and introducing law and order, he was enjoying the celebrity life style in the pleasures of sex, hunts and feasts. Generally, in popular literature, like folk *ruba'is*, most of which were ascribed to Khayyam (1048–1131), the life of Bahram Gur is a symbol of the vanity of being.

He is known as the king who got the throne by his personal bravery (killing two lions guarding it) and regained an absolute monarchic power by breaking a sinister tradition of the nobles and priests to elect, depose and kill kings (among whom was his father) at will. Among other features of his rule is the remittance of taxes and public debts on festive occasions.

His twin passions related to chasing women and animals are sublimated in the most popular and often illustrated story of the Bahram Gur cycle about him hunting accompanied only by his slave girl, a story known long before Firdausi, perhaps since the times of Sasanian king Bahram V Gur (420–438 AD), son of Yazdagird I and Šōšanduxt, a daughter of the Jewish exilarch and brought up in exile at the Lakhmid court. It is probably that very joyful royal life style, glorified through the objects of the Takht-i Sulaiman period with

25 A.Sh. Shahbazi, O. Klíma & W.L. Hanaway, Jr., "Bahrām", *EIr* online, accessed 31 March 2013.

Firdausi's quotations, or anonymous ruba'is about Bahram Gur, that was criticised so severely by later improvers of this story, like Amir Khusrau.²⁶

Probably Bahram's two main preoccupations with music and hunt on one hand and his military engagements with the Romans in Byzantium and the Caucasus on the other generated the legend about his love for a slave Rumi musician who found her tragic end when they were hunting together. The finale of Firdausi's version of the story is pretty severe and abrupt, although all its details about the hunting episode would be borrowed by the later literary sources. The girl whom Firdausi calls Azada ('free', 'noble') to juxtapose her social status and her behaviour assigns to Prince Bahram three tasks which he consistently performs by applying his unbelievable skill of archery and hunting.

When he proudly presents the results of his deeds, Azada is shocked and rebukes him for his pointless cruelty. Annoyed by her inconsistency and most of all by her suggesting that he was of demonic origin because only a demon was capable of doing what he had done, he throws her on the ground and tramples under the feet of his camel. This cruel outcome later received a rich intertextual development by several poets who offered their own versions of the story: from Nizami's rather feminist Cinderella-like story where Azada ([pseudo]-'free') turns to Fitna ([real] 'trouble', 'rebel')²⁷ and Amir Khusrau's philosophical interpretation about the woman called Dilaram ('pleasing one's heart') to later versions.²⁸

The story of a Christian lute player who was killed by her princely lover probably owes its popularity to its excruciatingly misogynistic and inequalities unfairness and has an ideological message of class and gender boundaries that could never be crossed. This, together with Nizami's later feminist 'improvement' makes this episode stand out among Bahram's many love affairs.²⁹ Nizami's reorientation from Byzantium to China (his lute player is a Chinese girl), makes the story not only more cosmopolitan and pleasing for the Mongol reader but possibly has a personal touch, as this could be a tribute to his own wife, a former slave of Qipchak origin. Nizami may have also wanted to create

26 F. Abdullaeva, "Women in the romances of the Shahnama", 44.

27 J. Meisami, "Fitna or Azada? Nizami's ethical poetic", 41–75; A. Gabbay, "Love gone wrong, then right again: male/female dynamics in the Bahrām Gūr-slave girl story", 677–92; F. Abdullaeva, "Ferdowsi: Male chauvinist or feminist?", 103–20; eadem, "Women in the romances of the Shahnama", 42; Qoreshi, "Bahram's feats", 190.

28 Abdullaeva, "Women in the romances of the Shahnama", 45; see also Christine van Ruymbeke's and Alyssa Gabbay's chapters in this volume [ed.].

29 Abdullaeva, "Ferdowsi: Male chauvinist or feminist?", 103–20

a completely romantic poem free from any political connotations with the real Bahram's³⁰ systematic persecution of the Christians.

Visual Representations of the Two Stories

The question why a particular episode of the *Shahnama* was chosen for illustration in various media, from metalwork and ceramics to book art, has always been central among literary scholars and art historians. It is now an established fact that the earliest book illustrations followed the patterns of architectural designs, used for wall paintings (frescos) and ceramic tiles—both thematically and iconographically. Obviously this tradition started in the pre-Islamic period when the walls in the houses of Penjikent oasis were decorated with the paintings telling folk stories inherited from ancient mythology, in a similar manner to the frescos in Crete or mosaics of Pompeii. The study of the architectural decoration preceding later book illustration is of special interest for providing prototypes not only for the preferred image but also its iconography, since in this case the narrative aspect of the illustration would be dominant, while the decorative, ornamental and abstract elements would be secondary.

Would it be the personal choice of the patron who commissioned an architectural construction or a book, or a craftsman's contribution to the project? In the case of Takht-i Sulaiman, the choice would most likely depend on both: obviously on the personal responsibility for the objects produced in the royal atelier of the person in charge, like the vizier Juvaini himself, as well as on the particular craftsmen who worked on the commission.

Takht-i Sulaiman as a Phenomenon of Perso-Mongolian Cosmopolitanism

Both stories, visually and textually, were used for decoration of the Takht-i Sulaiman palace ('Throne of Solomon'),³¹ the sole surviving palace of the Ilkhanid period and the only well-preserved example of Mongol secular architecture. This complex represents a royal summer palace of the Ilkhanid ruler either Abaqa (r. 1265–82) or Hülegü (r. 1258–65)³² in north-western Iran, built around a volcano crater over the ruins of the former Zoroastrian sanctuary

30 Wahram v (420–438), Sasanian king.

31 Masuya, "The Ilkhanid phase of Takht-i Sulayman", 606.

32 Ibid.; Watson, *Persian lustre ware*. For a full bibliography see the recent publication by J. Wiesehöfer, "The changing face of an Iranian sacred place: the Takht-i Sulayman", 15–25, and n. 7 above.

where the Sasanian kings were believed to have been crowned and stayed in their temporary summer residence. Thus the site was certainly chosen not only for its climate and location but also for its associations with ancient Iranian kingship.

The complex was lavishly decorated with tile revetments that covered both the exterior and interior walls of many of its buildings. The Ilkhanid phase at Takht-i Sulaiman, which was excavated between 1959 and 1978, includes a huge courtyard that encompasses an artificial lake. Porticoes surround the courtyard on its four sides, each with a vaulted chamber marking the centre and leading to other sections of the palace. The excavations revealed thousands of tile fragments, indicating that vividly painted gilt and lustre tiles were the primary means of ornamentation of interiors and exteriors of the buildings. The history of the construction has been discussed and several theories have been suggested. One of them is that the tiles for Takht-i Sulaiman could not only have been brought from Kashan but produced *in situ*. This was based on a mould found during excavations. However, as Masuya observes, it is very unlikely that the tiles dated winter 674/1275–76 could have been produced on site due to severe weather conditions in winter season.³³ In any event, this style of ceramics and particularly lustre ware would be still identified with Kashan due to its centuries-long history of production (since the 6th millennium BC), probably because of the fine clays available there.³⁴

Inscribed Ilkhanid wall tiles usually contain Arabic Qur'anic quotations, or more seldom, fragments from *hadith* literature.³⁵ Persian inscriptions have either short poems, mostly *ruba'i* or *dubaiti*, or brief excerpts from long works: epic, panegyric, romantic, lyric, didactic and Sufi poetry, or popular aphoristic expressions from long poems,³⁶ or combinations of these, as was shown by Sheila Blair.³⁷

The walls of one of the palace's chambers were covered with interlocking star-and-cross shaped tiles up to a height of six feet. Each star tile was decorated with a gilt dragon or a phoenix on a deep blue or a turquoise background; these mythic beasts were imported Chinese motifs associated with royalty. This

33 Masuya, *The Ilkhanid phase of Takht-i Sulayman*, 601.

34 On the production and inscriptions of frieze tiles and star tiles, see the pioneering article by R. Ettinghausen, "Evidence for the identification of Kāshān Pottery", who does not mention Takht-i Sulaiman; also Blair, "A brief biography of Abu Zayd", 3.

35 Gyuzalyan, "Frizovye izraztsy XIII v. s", 3.

36 Ghouchani, *Inscriptions on Nishabur pottery*.

37 The bowl from the David Collection contains two *ruba'is* and a fragment from the *Shahnama*, Blair, "A brief biography of Abu Zayd", 163.

section of the wall was probably surmounted by a band of square frieze tiles decorated in a colourful, glittery technique known as lustre painting, and again bearing dragons and phoenixes; however, here there would be introduced heroic characters and quotations from the *Shahnama*.³⁸

Compared with more politically, socially and architecturally significant centres of the Mongol empire like Hülegü's capital in Maragha, Abaqa's in Tabriz or Öljeitü's in Sultaniyya, or even Rashid al-Din's scholarly complex of Rab'-i Rashidi, the magnificent Takht-i Sulaiman could have been just a modest 'summer camp'. Nevertheless, the decoration programme of its tiles is so impressively rich that it demonstrates an extraordinary cultural tolerance and diversity of the 'Pax Mongolica' in this period, with a most fertile climate that allowed science and art to flourish. As has been mentioned by the scholars (archaeologists, historians and art historians) who have been studying various aspects of the Takht-i Sulaiman complex, this site and the artefacts from it that are now preserved in many museums and private collections throughout the world witness a fantastically successful merging of several ethnic and religious identities, for which a precedent would be the culturally diverse phenomenon of Persepolis. Indeed, the remains of the complex reflect the taste of "the Mongol Buddhist ruler, his Turkic Christian wife with elements of artistic repertoire of China, the Iranian Shi'ite craftsmen with Sasanian Zoroastrian ruins as a background."³⁹

The Chinese aesthetics adopted, adapted and brought by the Mongols to Iran were amalgamated with the heavily Islamised and Arabised Persian tradition that still preserved a very strong pre-Islamic component, which particularly in the borderline areas of the empire was rather multi-ethnic and cosmopolitan in nature. The best examples of this merger are the two ancient Chinese symbols of royal power: *long* 'dragon' (for male ruler, emperor) and *feng* 'phoenix' (for female ruler, empress), which, having arrived in Iran, mixed with the local Avestan *azhdaha* and *simurgh* (surrounded by the Qur'anic inscriptions and tiles with the name of 'Ali) and produced a time-resistant breed of phoenixes and dragons which moved from textiles, bronze and ceramic ware and decorations on the palace walls to paper in the manuscripts. It is believed that they were introduced into the illustration programme of the Takht-i Sulaiman tiles

38 S. Carboni & T. Masuya, *Persian tiles*; Mehdi Bahrani, "Le problème des ateliers d'étoiles de faïence lustrée", 160–91. The most recent publication by Shreve Simpson discusses the story of Furud depicted on the star tile from the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, M.S. Simpson, "Shahnama images and Shahnama settings in mediaeval Iran", 72–85.

39 Masuya, "The Ilkhanid phase of Takht-i Sulayman", 625.

not straight from pottery products but from other media, most likely from textiles and some other objects of applied arts.⁴⁰

Chinese Dragons and Phoenixes

There are many legends related to these images as ancient symbols of sovereignty supported or linked with divine power, when both dragon and phoenix play a role similar to that of the Christian holy spirit in the shape of a dove. At this stage the gender of both *long* and *feng* is still masculine because they both participate in a contact with a woman, mainly an empress, after which she becomes pregnant and gives birth to a semi-divine emperor. The evolution of these two images is also connected with the origin of two families of royal descent: of Confucius (551–479 BC) and his contemporary Laozi, a descendant of the legendary Xia dynasty. According to legend, Confucius, who was a descendant of the Yin dynasty, associated with *feng*, while Laozi's connection was with *long*. During the Mongol Yuan period (1279–1368), an imperial monopoly over the two symbols was established, and the royal dragon would have five claws and two horns. Interestingly, all Takht-i Sulaiman dragons have two horns but only four claws. Masuya suggests two reasons: either the Qa'an did not allow the Ilkhan to associate himself with the royal symbol of a five-clawed dragon, or by this time its iconography with this particular semantics had not yet been established.⁴¹

It is tempting to link the Chinese *long*-dragon symbolism with Firdausi's Zahhak, originally the Iranian *azhdaha*-dragon, whereby two similar ideas would be juxtaposed and perceived by the Persian consumers as a sort of not only anti-Arab resistance but also anti-Mongol mockery: it has been mentioned not once that the Mongol rulers who commissioned the palaces and their decoration were quite often unable to read and appreciate Persian poetry inscribed on the objects of art. At the same time the pictorial message, although more ambiguous, could be better understood.

The juxtaposition of the dragon symbolism in Chinese and Persian interpretation could have the same origin as the linguistic juxtaposition of the Persian words of common Indo-Iranian origin which would gain a meaning opposite to what it used to have in Sanskrit (Sanskrit *daeva* 'divine' > NP *div* 'demon', Sanskrit *pairika* 'witch' > NP *pari* 'fairy'). This semantic circle could be completed by Melikian-Chirvani's suggestion about a connotation between the Chinese-Mongol symbolism of the dragon-phoenix imagery with later Persian

40 Adamova, "Persian ceramics", 156.

41 Masuya, "The Ilkhanid phase of Takht-i Sulayman", 581.

Sufi interpretation by contrasting material or secular power (*azhdaha*) with heavenly or spiritual power (*simurgh*).⁴²

Generally speaking this double layered semantics of text and image, given the very special propaganda role of Takht-i Sulaiman as a means of enhancing the legitimacy of the Ilkhanid ruler, could be a hidden expression of anti-Mongol *shu'ubiya*.

Meaning of the Zahhak Story in the Decoration Programme of Takht-i Sulaiman

When the first draft of this paper was almost finished, I came across Shreve Simpson's article on the *Shahnama* scenes on early Iranian ceramics, where she declares the same conclusion about the special preference for the two episodes about Zahhak and Bahram Gur, inviting further research to explain this very important phenomenon.⁴³

The extreme popularity of the *Shahnama* story about the foreign dragon king and tyrant could be a nationalistic reaction against an alien culture, symbolised by the Chinese-Mongol dragon, imposed on a Persian substrate with a similarly negative attitude towards the Arab conquerors. This common attitude could merge in the image of the Arab dragon king Zahhak (Avestan Aži Dahāka), whose 1000-year tyranny was ended by the legitimate Persian king Faridun (Av. Θraētaona).⁴⁴ The image of Zahhak as a symbol of tyranny to be overthrown however strong he is, has been popular in Iran and outside the country among the Persian communities all over the world until nowadays. Among the latest examples of this are the plays and musical performances in Europe (*Till Ulenspiegel*) and the U.K. (*The Persian Dragon King*).⁴⁵

Among the earliest examples should be mentioned a mural painting from the Harvard Museum, which demonstrates already the iconography of the scene that became standard for many centuries since then. The fresco depicts

42 Melikian-Chirvani, "Le Shah-Name, la gnose soufi et le pouvoir mongol", 317–31; idem, "Le livre des rois, miroir de destin. II. Takht-e Soleyman et la symbolique du Shāh-nāme", 102–9.

43 Simpson, "Shahnama images", 81–82.

44 P.O. Skjaervø, "*azdahā* in Old and Middle Iranian"; Dj. Khaleghi-Motlagh, "*azdahā* in Persian literature"; and J. Russell, "*azdahā* in Iranian folktales".

45 "Tell/Zahhak" staged by the Swiss Theatre Mass & Fieber directed by Niklaus Helbling and Iran's Don Quixote Theater Troupe under Nasim Adabipur, January 2012; "The Persian Dragon King" was directed by Hossein Hadisi and was a joint production of the Pembroke Shahnama Centre and the Faculty of Music, University of Cambridge, premiered in October 2013.

Faridun riding the cow Barmaya and leading the overthrown Zahhak to the place of his execution on the mount Damavand.⁴⁶

This means that there could be a 'consumer segregation', as pictorial images of the dragons, still very Chinese and familiar, which would be recognised by the Mongols as positive signs, while the textual images, sometimes supported by the visual interpretations of the Persian story, would be expected to be appreciated by the Persian speakers. This double publicity would enhance and explain the popularity of the Zahhak story. An episode mentioned in the earliest Persian *tafsir* (exegetal) literature seems to be relevant here: it is a *hadith* about the cunning Jews who laughed at the naïve Prophet in public when he used the word *ra'ina*,⁴⁷ to address the believers, because this expression existed in both Arabic and Hebrew but had different meanings.⁴⁸

The Meaning of the Bahram Story in the Decoration Programme of Takht-i Sulaiman

The choice could have been predetermined by the king's fabulous fame and association with legends in all Eastern lands from India to Byzantium, due to his victorious battles with the Romans and Huns. His image of an exemplary womaniser, *joueur* and *bon vivant*, famous for his extraordinary sexual power, could also have a double meaning, each appealing to different audiences: for the Mongols he would be a symbol of a successful warrior and hunter, a cosmopolitan by nature and origin, capable of enjoying his life in full; for the Persians, it would be a reminder of their glorious and sophisticated civilisation, and a nostalgia for idealised pre-Islamic and pre-Mongol times, when Iran was an conquering empire, not the conquered one.⁴⁹

46 A. Pope & P. Ackerman, *A survey of Persian art*, 5, pl. 554; Adamova, *Mediaeval Persian painting*, 2, fig. 1; Shreve Simpson, "Narrative allusion and metaphor"; eadem, "Shahnama images", 75. It should be mentioned that according to the detailed conservation survey of 2011, which basically confirmed the conclusion made in 1935 before the purchase of the object from H. Kevorkian and kindly shared by Mary McWilliams, the pigments used for the restoration of the paintings were made in the early 19th century when it was so heavily retouched that it is now difficult to be certain if the original composition did indeed belong to the Seljuk period.

47 Qur'an, Sura 2 al-Baqara (The Cow), ayat 98; this explains why the word "*ra'ina*", although mentioned by the Prophet, should be avoided as it was used by Muhammad's Jewish opponents to mock him. In Hebrew it was a term of insult, while in Arabic is meant 'look at us, listen to us'.

48 *Tafsir-i Qur'an-i pak*, 48; *Tolkovanie Korana (Lahorskiy tafsir)*, 86.

49 These remarks apply equally to the story of Bahram and Arzu and the more popular one of Bahram and Azada, both reflecting generically Bahram's sexual energy.

Discussion

From Carving to Tile and from Tile to Manuscript and Back to Tile: Shift from King to Hero

It is believed that the tiles carrying an inscriptional or pictorial narrative originated from the carved friezes with benevolent inscriptions and sculptural illustrations on the facades of the most important buildings. The technique of producing the tiles made decoration with frieze inscriptions more affordable and it became more popular even for interior decoration. While even the 'real' inscriptions on rectangular tiles were inaccessible and almost illegible, the star-shaped tiles appeared, most probably for displaying poetic inscriptions and reading them.⁵⁰

When the dragons and simurghs finally moved and settled down in manuscripts a curious shift of the artists'/patrons' preference occurred: although the stories were still densely inhabited with these supernatural creatures the illustrators' prior attention was already given to the humans, kings and heroes, and particularly to the cycle dedicated to the Sistani knight Rustam. It was not a shift from mythology to epic: it was a shift of focus from the figure of the king to his vassal hero, remarkably—in the Book of Kings!

As the data of the Cambridge Shahnama Project shows, the most popular scenes illustrated in the manuscripts starting from the 14th century are the following: Rustam kills the White Div (307), Rustam kills Suhrab (274),⁵¹ Rustam kills Isfandiyar (267),⁵² the Fire ordeal of Siyavush (227), the Execution of Siyavush (234), Rustam kills Ashkabus (220), and the Death of Rustam (241).⁵³ For comparison, the numbers of illustrations related to the stories of Zahhak and Bahram Gur are as follows: Faridun and Zahhak (84),⁵⁴ and Bahram and Azada (155).⁵⁵

Having described the two tiles and noted the possible significance of the choice of extracts from the *Shahnama* that they contain, it is worth addressing

50 Gyuzalyan, "Frizovye izraztsy".

51 The figure 274 as on 24 August 2016 comes from the number of illustrations depicting 'Rustam mortally wounds Suhrab' (143), 'Rustam discovers Suhrab's identity' (121), and 'Rustam laments for dying Suhrab' (10).

52 The figure 267 comes from the scenes 'Rustam shoots Isfandiyar in the eyes with a double-pointed arrow' (230); 'The dying Isfandiyar advises Rustam' (9), and 'Isfandiyar mourned' (28).

53 'Rustam falls into a pit' (13) and 'Rustam kills Shaghad before dying' (228).

54 'Faridun defeats Zahhak' (49) and 'Faridun binds Zahhak on Damavand' (35).

55 'Bahram hunts in the company of Azada' (108) and 'Bahram shows his prowess on the hunting grounds' (21) and 'tramples her with his horse/camel' (26).

briefly a few other points connected with the use of these ceramics as wall coverings. First, concerning the stories, we do not know of course, how much of the stories of Zahhak and Faridun, or Bahram Gur, was actually transcribed onto the tiles: surely not the whole text, but presumably at least extracts and quotations that were sufficient if not to tell the whole story at least enough for it to be easily recognised. Both stories, though ever popular and as we have seen, enjoying a very long tradition of illustration on metalwork and ceramics, were not among those that became the most frequently illustrated in the manuscript tradition from the 14th century onwards. Inscribed tiles, together with other ceramic and bronze artefacts, which started to appear in the 12th century (inspired by the ceramists of Egypt and Syria who fled or were brought from the Fatimid lands in the last quarter of the 12th century),⁵⁶ were produced throughout the 13th century and gradually disappeared in the 14th, as if they were indeed replaced by the manuscripts. This begs the questions, who chose the texts, and were they intended to be read?

Who was Responsible for the Choice of the Texts?

It is possible that most of the inscriptions on the 'utilitarian' ceramic vessels could be chosen by those who commissioned them. However, the potters of the highest rank and qualification, like Abu Zaid, i.e. those who had the right to sign their creations, would be offering the commissioners themselves a range of possibilities to choose from.

As for a more mass production, there are several theories. Gyuzalyan's idea was that once attached to the walls the tiles reflected the process of their manufacturing. The repertoire of the poetic fragments betrayed the influence and tastes of those ordinary craftsmen who were producing them, often spontaneously singing while painting the images and writing the inscriptions.⁵⁷ Blair refers to Ghouchani's suggestion that the written texts were dictated to the potters, who reproduced them in mass quantities. As a proof, Ghouchani mentions the text separators usually in Arabic and some homonyms and even mistakes.⁵⁸

Were all the Tiles Intended to be Seen, the Inscriptions Read and the Stories Recognised and Appreciated?

There is a possible explanation why the Qur'anic or other religious quotations would be used in such places inaccessible for potential readers: they could

⁵⁶ Blair, "A brief biography of Abu Zayd", 3.

⁵⁷ Gyuzalyan, "Frizovye izraztsy", 80.

⁵⁸ Blair, "A brief biography of Abu Zayd", 167.

have been even deliberately hidden from a stranger as the divine protection could be more effective if the forces of evil were unaware about its existence in the place. If this could be the case, might the poetic fragments have a similar meaning to be treated in a similar manner? This would suggest an extraordinary respect for Persian poetry and the *Shahnama* in particular from people with very pro-Iranian views, similar to Firdausi himself. Their views may not even have had such a militant ideological component, so much as an innocent playfulness, or desire to surround themselves with the objects decorated with the inscriptions in their native language. These objects would be both luxury items and of everyday use, and certainly not only decorative but mostly utilitarian, like drinking or eating vessels, and tiles on the walls of the rooms where the owners would eat, drink and entertain their guests.

However, if the inscriptions were real but illegible and put in the places where they could never be read or even properly seen, were they meant just for admiration of their arabesque ornaments comprising geometric and/or calligraphic decorations?

Real and Fake Inscriptions

Fake inscriptions are the imitations of real ones produced by either illiterate apprentices, or foreigners who were trying to forge popular products, or probably masters who knew that these objects, especially tiles, would not be seen close enough. Real inscriptions are of two main types, depending on the purpose of the building they were meant for: religious (with mainly Qur'anic verses) and secular (with the verses from love poetry from short forms, like *ruba'i*, to epic poems).

Sheila Blair suggests that inscriptions could be intentionally written in such an illegible and puzzling manner, which was probably introduced by the potters of the Samanid era, as if the witty aphorisms were deliberately ciphered and hidden behind the adorned knots, plaits and flourishes. Later such riddles would become even more complicated, to make the task of the erudite quiz more difficult and the gathering more entertaining by shuffling different bits of real poetry (from Firdausi to Rumi) with folk *ruba'is* and disparaging them by putting them onto an object in a sort of a doggerel, almost imitating the popular anthologies produced by the authors like Ravandi.⁵⁹ In other words, the reason was a kind of intellectual game à la *sapienti sat*, which would be part of a sophisticated entertainment for the erudite audience who were expected to recognise the inscribed poetry as easily as the believers knowing the Qur'an by heart would immediately recognise the *ayats* inscribed on the walls

59 Blair, "A brief biography of Abu Zayd", 166.

of mosques and official edifices. Shreve Simpson supports this idea, suggesting that those who could afford such parties literally surrounded themselves with *Shahnama* imagery in their everyday life. Their palatial interiors could be decorated both with tiles (like the one from the Boston Museum depicting the story of Furud), or wall paintings (like the fresco 'portraying' Zahhak and Faridun from Harvard), representing episodes from the *Shahnama* both visually and/or textually. The objects of everyday life, like the Freer beaker with the whole story of Bizhan and Manizha pictorially narrated in great detail on its surface, would be produced for the same purpose, namely to be used during such parties, involving recitations from the *Shahnama*.⁶⁰

Despite the beauty of this romantic idea, I am more skeptical about this suggestion. Visual art since its dawn proves to have originated from an illustration of a narrative, so that an image illustrating either secular or religious subjects would be treated as a pictorial text. It is unlikely that Rembrandt was expecting those who would admire his *Joseph accused by Potiphar's wife* to start reciting this story from the Bible; however, it was obviously an encouragement to correlate his story with their own life experience,⁶¹ probably similar to what the painters of the Hermitage Rustam Hall had in mind.

Having said this, it is possible to suppose that there was no ideological reason for using tiles with Persian poetry in big halls and putting them in places where they could never be seen, read and admired. This was not a deliberate decision to hide the inscriptions from an evil eye, but an inevitable occasional waste. This could occur when tile production became relatively cheap and when a rich patron would make a large commission; the tiles would be produced in bulk without any particularly planning regarding the particular place to be allocated for every single tile. The most visible places, like facades and friezes where the inscriptions were to be seen and admired, had to be of special quality and comprise complete religious or poetic phrases.

Two Centuries of Silence of the Shahnama

Gyuzalyan was undoubtedly right: the period when these tiles were produced is the most enigmatic and obscure in the whole history of the *Shahnama*. It is a great puzzle why the earliest surviving manuscripts of the *Shahnama* appear only in the 14th century, i.e. almost three hundred years after Firdausi's death. The Florentine non-illustrated manuscript of 1217 is a unique exception, while the 14th century witnesses the increasing numbers gradually turning to

60 Simpson, "Shahnama images", 79. See also the discussion in Melikian-Chirvani, "Takht-e Soleyman", 90, on the placement and deciphering of the tiles.

61 Mieke Bal, *Reading Rembrandt: Beyond the word-image opposition*.

a real flood of *Shahnama* copies of all levels of production and especially of illustrated ones. The eternal question is still unanswered satisfactorily: what was happening during 'the two centuries of silence' after Firdausi's death? Why don't we have any manuscripts surviving from this period? Was the *Shahnama* simply out of fashion?⁶² Was that fashion political, social, or cultural, so that immediately after Firdausi's death the legends started to circulate about his authorship of *Yusuf and Zulaikha*, the *Shahnama*'s more 'politically correct' substitution? Did it only go out of fashion, or was it taken out of circulation and maybe even prohibited due to its political incorrectness?⁶³ Were the manuscripts produced but later destroyed, or never executed during this time? How was the text surviving during this period: only orally, or were the episodes recorded from time to time over the centuries from the wandering story tellers by the *dihqans* committed to their national heritage like Danishvar (who was working on his Middle Persian version of the *Kwaday namag* for about twenty years and finished right by 651)⁶⁴ and Firdausi, or courtiers, like Daqiqi? In this case the improvisations of the bazaar story tellers as well as later scribes' 'improvements' inevitably resulted in alterations and additions of occasional and deliberate interpolations, or omissions of the author's original.

This was Gyuzalyan's idealistic interpretation of the discrepancies between the texts in the books and on the walls. Melikian-Chirvani, on the contrary, suggested that the verses from the *Shahnama* were deliberately adapted, for example to make them in the first person and therefore to connect in such an elegant manner the patron who commissioned the construction with the heroes of the epic past.⁶⁵

Apart from preserving a possibly more 'authentic' Firdausi text, the tiles with the *Shahnama* inscriptions can complicate the idea of reconstructing the missing fragments of the poem. If a tile would preserve a verse, seemingly from the *Shahnama*, but not found in standard editions based on the majority of the surviving manuscripts, this can also mean that the verse in question might

62 J.S. Meisami, *Persian historiography: to the end of the twelfth century*.

63 E.E. Bertel's, "Bor'ba pridvornykh poetov Sultana Mahmuda protiv Firdausi", 202–7.

64 Bertel's, *History of Persian literature*, 193. This text has not survived although a fragment like the one preserved in a Soghdian scroll can witness the circulation of such texts in the pre-Islamic period. This prose fragment colourfully describes the episode of Rustam battling the divs, riding foxes and other animals, which was not included by Firdausi into his narrative; S. Whitfield & U. Sims-Williams, *The Silk Road: trade, travel, war and faith*, 119.

65 Melikian-Chirvani, "Takht-e Soleyman", 110–11, and cf. *Les frises*, 72. The point also emphasised by Sheila Blair in personal correspondence.

belong to a text from a parallel or an earlier version than that of Firdausi, for example one composed by Daqiqi or someone else.

It is very likely that Daqiqi wrote more than the thousand and eight *baits* which Firdausi generously saved for future generations by incorporating them into his poem. It is not impossible that he could have written a complete poem, although not as extensive as his successor's. Firdausi's motives for incorporating Daqiqi's part and acknowledge this in a very specific way could be two-fold: one is the attempt to remove from himself and onto his dead predecessor the responsibility for praising Zoroastrianism out of political correctness: Daqiqi's part is about the emergence of Zaratushtra and Gushtasp's adoption of this religion. Firdausi, who by this time already had quite an ambiguous reputation of not being a proper Sunni Muslim, could have hoped to avoid accusations of sympathies to Zoroastrianism and to Daqiqi, murdered according to one of the legends precisely for his open and even deliberately pro-Zoroastrian ideology. We will never know Firdausi's real aim in using Daqiqi's fragment and distancing himself from him. He might have tried to save at least this bit from oblivion out of respect for his fellow poet and his tremendous work. However, according to his own explanation he incorporates it only to show the difference between their style of work and the superiority of his literary talent over the weak craftsmanship of Daqiqi. It is not impossible that Firdausi incorporated some of the episodes written by Daqiqi without acknowledging their authorship, and not out of malicious plagiarism but for a noble reason to preserve by all means as much as possible of the written work by the person who himself was physically eliminated for his poetry, acknowledgement of which in this case would not have served the purpose.

All these questions may never be answered unless one day a sort of a Persian *Geniza* is discovered with at least some dated fragments produced between the death of Firdausi and the earliest known manuscripts. It is not even absolutely impossible to imagine that even Firdausi's autograph could be discovered, and it could be quite different to the text we ascribe to him. However, until this happens, if at all, we should rely on what is available and base our conclusions mainly on our own speculations and the critics of text. Speaking about the Geniza, the Small *Shahnamas*, introduced mostly by Shreve Simpson, could partly perform this role as they witness the sudden popularity of the *Shahnama* and the survival of its manuscripts.

Several generations of scholars have been taking very different approaches to the study of the surviving *Shahnama* texts. The two extreme views represent two juxtaposed ideas: 1) purification from later and alien interpolations and reconstruction of the unknown original and 2) preservation of potentially the whole heritage of Firdausi, even if questionable, trying not throw out the

baby with the bath water, i.e. not to lose a single surviving word that could have been written by Firdausi.

Gyazalyan belonged to the first group of scholars, who had enough knowledge and taste of Firdausi's style to justify the academic extremism. In his many articles he tried to decide for himself and explain to his readers the IlKhanid tiles puzzle, which contains many questions, like: why some episodes were preferred for depiction to others and why the tiles which would never be seen once they were attached too high up on the walls would still have poetic inscriptions. This paper is one more contribution to many attempts of Gyuzalyan's pupils, colleagues and successors to solve this enigma.

Conclusions

1. The extreme popularity of the two stories during the Mongol period, about the foreign tyrant ruling Iran and the Sasanian royal hunter and music lover, could reflect the multi-layered meaning of Bahram Gur's image. He could symbolise an ideal hero monarch and successfully appeal to both such culturally diverse milieux: his personal skills as an ideal warrior and hunter with superhuman sexual potency could be appreciated by the nomadic mentality of the Mongols as well as the Chinese harem culture, while the Persians would perceive Bahram as a symbol of the revival of their past glory, associated with intelligent rule, brave conquests and sophisticated court life and entertainment, including sexual and musical pleasures.
2. Both stories, and Zahhak in particular, could be recognised as the expression of the hidden anti-Mongol cultural *shu'ubiyya* developed and spread in Iran in all social layers—from wealthy aristocrats and courtiers to craftsmen directly responsible for the mass production of tiles decorating the royal palaces and other non-religious edifices.
3. The images of both kings survived the peak of their popularity under Mongol rule with a later shift to the heroes, in particular Rustam, of the Sistan cycle, when *Shahnama* manuscript production became widespread, catering for audiences of both the court and the bazaar.
4. The stories reflected the general cosmopolitanism of the Mongol rulers, influenced of course by officials such as Juvaini, who encouraged an eclectic style in interior and exterior architectural decoration, including pictorial and inscriptional media, which combined the elements of an Iranian Zoroastrian substrate, with Islam brought by the Arabs and Chinese influence brought by the Mongols. They also mediate some

- cultural clashes between the Persian pre-Islamic urban, later Islamic and nomadic traditions in treating the ideas of kingship and gender.
5. The iconographic coincidence of the dragons and phoenixes (Chinese *longs* and *fengs* and the Iranian *azhdahas* and *simurghs*), led to the gradual evolution and construction of a composite imagery under the influence of Sufi ideology, whereby the male–female dichotomy was transformed and gained a more material–spiritual dimension.
 6. It could also be argued that the usage of the ‘authentic’ Iranian symbols and images, particularly in premises specially designed for private life and entertainment, could be a sign of the relative freedom that was permitted to the craftsmen depicting familiar stories without any particular ideological agenda.
 7. Not all tiles were intended to be seen and their entire decoration deciphered. The tiles were produced at the peak of popularity of this craft when their production became relatively easier, quicker and cheaper. They were of several types: those of high quality with legible inscriptions and meaningful pictorial narratives were made by masters to be used for decorating the most visible places in the building. The bulk of lower quality work was produced by their apprentices, often illiterate, whose tiles could be used everywhere else, especially where they would never be seen properly and the message contained in their [pseudo-]inscriptions or illustrations could never be deciphered. It was because the tiles became produced in large quantities by many apprentices that sometime the objects of high quality happened to be in the unreachable places, mainly due to mis-assignment or miscalculation of the original design.

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Illustration as Localization: A Dispersed Bijapuri Manuscript of the *Shahnama*

Laura Weinstein

During the late 16th and early 17th centuries painters and calligraphers in the employ of the Mughal emperors and Deccani sultans of India were profoundly industrious, producing a great number of exquisite illustrated manuscripts, among other things. In many cases, the texts of these manuscripts were classics of Persian literature, both poetry and prose. It is surprising, therefore, that no intact manuscript of the *Shahnama* sponsored by these rulers is known by art historians today.¹

All that survives from the imperial Mughal atelier are a few painted folios that were perhaps made for an Akbar-period *Shahnama*² and a handful that once belonged to a copy made for Jahangir around 1610.³ Evidence of royally-sponsored *Shahnama* manuscripts from the Deccan is equally sparse. If one broadens one's view to manuscripts produced for high-ranking nobility at these courts, however, more material can be identified. Most well-known is the *Shahnama* made for the Mughal courtier 'Abd al-Rahim Khan-i Khanan.⁴ Less well-known are the many text pages and folios with paintings that have survived from an illustrated *Shahnama* produced at the Deccani court of Bijapur around 1610. This manuscript is dispersed around the globe and only isolated

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- 1 This is certainly the result of destruction and loss but it also reflects a relative lack of interest in this text. Elaine Wright has suggested that "the stories of the *Shahnama* were, and remain today, immensely popular within the Persian-speaking world, but although the Mughals revered most things Persian, it is clear that, not surprisingly, Firdawsi's work found less favor with the Mughal rulers of India than it did with the rulers of Iran itself." Elaine Wright, *Muraqqa': Imperial Mughal Albums from the Chester Beatty Library*, Dublin, 240.
 - 2 We know from the Mughal chronicler Badauni that around 1582 Akbar ordered the production of a *Shahnama*, but not whether it was illustrated. References for a few Akbar-era *Shahnama* paintings are given in n. 37 below. For Badauni's comments about Akbar's manuscript, see 'Abd al-Qadir ibn Muluk Shah Badauni, *Muntakhab Ut-Tawarikh*, 329.
 - 3 Elaine Wright has suggested that approximately twenty pages survive from a single Jahangir-period imperial copy of the *Shahnama*. Most of these are text pages without illustrations. She lists the known pages in Wright *et al.*, *Muraqqa'*, 240 n. 42.
 - 4 John Seyller, *Workshop and patron in Mughal India*.

pages have been published. As a result, it has received very little scholarly attention.⁵

The discussion in this paper is based upon analysis of 15 painted pages from the Bijapur *Shahnama*, and it uses them to craft an analysis of the manuscript as a whole.⁶ Comparison with contemporaneous illustrated manuscripts from Bijapur and Mughal *Shahnama* paintings brings to light the distinctive features of the dispersed manuscript, sparking questions about approaches to the illustration of this venerated text in and around one Deccani court.

Historical Context

The 'Adil Shahi sultanate, with its capital at Bijapur in the modern state of Karnataka, was one of five states that emerged towards the end of the 15th century when the Bahmani kingdom, which had ruled a large part of the Deccan plateau in South India since the mid-14th century, dissolved. The sultanate's founder was Yusuf 'Adil Khan, an Iranian immigrant who arrived in India in about 1460.⁷ In his adopted homeland Yusuf quickly rose to prominence under the Bahmanis and became the governor of a region in the western Deccan. By 1490 the Bahmanis had become rulers in name only, however, and Yusuf declared independent rule over the region that he had previously governed, establishing the 'Adil Shahi sultanate.⁸

Becoming the ruler of a kingdom within the Indian subcontinent did not, however, impel Yusuf to dissolve his ties to Iran. On the contrary, he was well aware of developments such as the coming to power of the Shi'i Safavid dynasty in 1501, and he acted in response to this development by declaring Shi'ism the official state religion of Bijapur in 1503.⁹ Although later rulers of the 'Adil Shahi

5 The only substantive treatment to date is Terence McNerney, *Indian painting, 1525–1825: An exhibition*.

6 I have written elsewhere about the four illustrated pages in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. See Haidar & Sardar, *Sultans of Deccan India, 1500–1700: Opulence and fantasy*, cat. no. 34–37. As of the date of printing, one additional painted page from this manuscript has been located. It is in a private collection and depicts Furud, son of Siyavush, and his fight with Giv.

7 There is some confusion among scholars about Yusuf's exact origins. The various viewpoints are discussed by H.K. Sherwani *et al.*, *History of medieval Deccan, 1295–1724*, 291, who simply describes Yusuf as having arrived in India "from Iran."

8 The sultanate would rule this region until 1686, when it was absorbed into the Mughal Empire.

9 The contentious process by which Shi'i Islam was established in Bijapur is described in Sherwani *et al.*, *History of medieval Deccan*, 298–300.

sultanate sometimes declared Sunni Islam to be Bijapur's official faith, bonds between Bijapur and Iran stayed strong. These ties were maintained over time through a concerted diplomatic, mercantile and religio-cultural effort. Bijapur sent envoys to the Safavid court, welcomed large numbers of Iranian immigrants into the 'Adil Shahi administration, and used the Persian language for diplomatic, historiographical and literary purposes.

In light of the long-standing and manifold ties that bound Bijapur to Iran, it seems natural that an illustrated copy of the *Shahnama* would have been produced there. Ibrahim 'Adil Shah kept at least one manuscript of the *Shahnama* in his royal library, and *Shahnama* scenes appear among early 17th-century wall paintings at the garden-complex of Kumatgi near Bijapur.¹⁰ But in fact the dispersed *Shahnama* that is our subject here is the only known illustrated manuscript of a classic work of Persian literature to have been made in Bijapur during this period.¹¹ Unlike Bijapur's rival sultanate, Golconda, at which a number of illustrated copies of Persian classics were produced in the late 16th century, most manuscripts from Bijapur in the same period contain original, locally-composed texts.¹² Most of these texts were written in Dakani, an early form of Urdu that was generated in this region. The production of a *Shahnama* manuscript in early 17th-century Bijapur is, therefore, both perfectly logical and quite unexpected.

The Manuscript

The Bijapur *Shahnama* is a small, delicate codex (fig. 13.1). The primary support of its folios is a very fine, cream-coloured paper speckled with gold. It has, in most cases, been re-margined with a darker and more brittle paper. As a result of this re-margining, the folios' original size is unknown; most pages are now roughly 200 by 120 millimeters. Text pages of the manuscript contain twenty-five lines of *nasta'liq* inscribed within gold and black rules. Those pages with illustrations also have interlinear gold illumination. The extensive use of gold

10 British Library [BL], I.O. Islamic 3254. Keelan Overton, *A collector and his portrait*, 136–39.

11 This is not to suggest that such texts were not appreciated at Bijapur's court. On the contrary, many copies of Persian classics were once in the library of Ibrahim 'Adil Shah II. Overton, *A collector and his portrait*, 82–83.

12 Namely, the *Nujum al-'ulum* (Chester Beatty [CBL], In 02, 1570–71), the *Javahir al-musikat* (BL, Or. 12857, ca. 1570) and the *Pem Nem* (BL, Add. 16,880, ca. 1591–1604). For basic information about the *Nujum al-'ulum* see Linda York Leach, *Mughal and other Indian paintings from the Chester Beatty Library*, 819–89. For the *Javahir al-musikat* see J.P. Losty, *The art of the book in India*, no. 51, and for the *Pem Nem*, see Deborah Hutton, "The Pem Nem: A sixteenth-century illustrated romance from Bijapur".



FIGURE 13.1 *Rostam rescues Bizhan from the pit. Victoria & Albert Museum, given by Dr Gursharan and Mrs Elvira A. Sidhu (1s.75–1993) © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.*

Unless noted, all images are from a dispersed *Shahnama*, India (Karnataka, Bijapur), ca. 1610, ink, opaque watercolor and gold on paper.

and the quality of the primary support give these pages a grandeur that belies their small size.

The splendour of the manuscript's paper, rulings and miniatures, in combination with the style of its illustrations, led Terence McNerney to suggest in 1982 that it may have been made for Bijapur's royal family around 1610.¹³ In the late 16th and early 17th century, Bijapur's royal court was indeed a major centre of artistic production. Sultan Ibrahim 'Adil Shah II (r. 1579–1627) was a great patron of the arts in addition to being himself a musician and author. He sponsored the production of paintings and manuscripts, architectural monuments, and even a new city.¹⁴ Ibrahim's court also drew one of the stars among India's painters at the time, Farrukh Beg, whose departure from the Mughal court for Bijapur indicates the great allure the city held for artists in this period.¹⁵ As no colophon for the *Shahnama* has been located we cannot say with certainty whether it was royally sponsored, but there is little doubt that it was a product of the sophisticated courtly community that flourished at Bijapur in this period.

The notion that this *Shahnama* manuscript originated in Bijapur in the early decades of the 17th century is further reinforced by its resemblance to another codex from Bijapur, the *Pem Nem* or "The Laws of Love," now housed in the British Library.¹⁶ This manuscript has been dated to roughly 1591–1604. The text of the *Pem Nem* was written at the court of Bijapur by Hasan Manjhu Khalji in Dakani. It is a Sufi allegory narrating the romance between a prince, Shah Ji, and princess, Mah Ji, in order to evoke the Sufi's struggle for union with the divine.¹⁷ The author praises Ibrahim 'Adil Shah II in the preface, which suggests that even if the manuscript was not expressly commissioned by the sultan, it was made within the sphere of his court.

The 239 folios of the *Pem Nem* are 240 by 160 millimeters in size, a bit larger than those of the *Shahnama*, but still within the category of manuscripts made for intimate examination rather than for ceremonial or public viewing. Among the folios of the manuscript one finds 34 mostly full-page illustrations bounded by gold rulings beyond which they rarely protrude (fig. 13.2). Although several

13 Terence McNerney, *Indian painting, 1525–1825*, 49.

14 Ibrahim 'Adil Shah II's patronage of art and architecture is discussed extensively in Hutton, *Art of the court of Bijapur*.

15 Farrukh Beg probably worked at Ibrahim's court from about 1596 to 1609, producing for this ruler a number of portraits. For the most recent treatment of this artist's complex career, see Milo Beach, "Farrukh Beg".

16 BL, Add. 16880. See note 12.

17 The text is discussed in David Matthews, "*Pem Nem*: A 16th-century Dakani manuscript".



FIGURE 13.2 *Prince listening to a yogini play. Folio 46r of the Pem Nem. Page: $9\frac{1}{2} \times 6\frac{1}{4}$ in. (24 × 16 cm) © The British Library Board, ADD. 16880 fol. 46r.*

hands have been identified and codicological evidence shows that the paintings were not all produced at the same time, the visual vocabulary of these illustrations is quite consistent. Many paintings feature white palace buildings clustered on the horizon and trees with lightly speckled edges. The palette emphasizes red, green and orange, and there is ample use of gold, especially for the sky and for costume details.

The clothing worn by male figures in the *Pem Nem*'s illustrations includes a translucent or coloured *jama* over a *pajama*, tied at the waist by a gold *patka*, and a shawl wrapped around the shoulders.¹⁸ Although *jama* is a word of Persian origin, it describes a stitched garment that covers the upper and lower body that was worn throughout North and South India in the medieval and early modern periods.¹⁹ During the late 16th century this garment was particularly taken up at the Mughal court, where Akbar (r. 1565–1605) decreed the *jama* should be worn according to certain specifications, but it was also worn at the Deccani courts.²⁰ In the 16th- and 17th-century Deccan these three garments were often enhanced by the addition of the shawl-like wrap which appears in several of the *Pem Nem* illustrations.

Deborah Hutton has argued that the appearance in the manuscript of the stylistic features mentioned above and these types of garments, as well as an emphasis on images of familiar courtly celebrations, “serve to situate the tale ... in a wholly Bijapuri visual environment.”²¹ They do so, she suggests, in order to make the story and its setting familiar to its ‘Adil Shahi audience. Since the prince and princess of the *Pem Nem* are not described as being from Bijapur (rather, he is from Chittor and she is from Sri Lanka) this is all the more significant. The text may not situate the events of the story in Bijapur, but the illustrations would nevertheless have given the story local resonance.

One unique and important feature of the *Pem Nem* is the manner in which its illustrations depict events in the text on both literal and figurative levels. For example, on folio 46r (fig. 13.2) we see Shah Ji sitting in a field with a *yogini*, yearning for Mah Ji, with whom he has fallen in love. Remarkably, the artist

18 *Pajama* are drawstring trousers. *Jama* can be defined in different ways. I am here using the word in the sense prescribed by Ritu Kumar and Cathy Muscat, who define it as a “side-fastening frock-coat worn for formal occasions whose distinguishing features are a tight-fitting bodice, a high waist and a flared skirt that reaches at least to the knee.” Ritu Kumar & Cathy Muscat, *Costumes and textiles of Royal India*, 150, 327. A *patka* is a sash or waistband. For an extensive discussion of this garment, see B.N. Goswamy & Rahul Jain, *Indian costumes II: Patkas, a costume accessory*.

19 Kumar & Muscat, *Costumes and textiles of Royal India*, 27.

20 Ibid., 39.

21 Hutton, *Art of the court of Bijapur*, 76.

has inscribed Mah Ji's face on his chest, giving visual form to the prince's emotional connection to his beloved. Other visual representations of the spiritual or emotional condition of the protagonists appear throughout these paintings. This artistic agenda takes precedence even over the representation of major events from the narrative. Hutton has argued that interest in creating visual representations of spiritual ideas and poetic ideals is in fact one of the defining characteristics of Bijapuri artistic production around the beginning of the 17th century.²²

The Bijapur *Shahnama* shares a number of features with the *Pem Nem*. Unfortunately, it is not currently known how many folios or illustrations the *Shahnama* originally included, so we cannot compare the two manuscripts on those grounds. We can, however, observe that they are both relatively small manuscripts with intimately scaled illustrations in which gold skies, speckled trees, and distant clusters of white castles predominate (fig. 13.3). Furthermore, both employ a palette featuring saturated reds and oranges frequently paired with green and purple. These formal similarities support McInerney's dating of the *Shahnama* manuscript to circa 1610.

When we look beyond these formal features, however, we find that the paintings in the *Shahnama* diverge markedly from those of the *Pem Nem*. One difference is that the *Shahnama* illustrations, unlike most of their counterparts in the *Pem Nem*, appear on folios with text. Most of the illustrated folios include at least nine lines of text divided into two portions that sandwich the painted field. These lines are often laid out so as to create a stepped area for the miniature, a long-standing convention of Persian illustrated manuscripts and one frequently observed in *Shahnama* manuscripts.

Second, whereas the *Pem Nem* paintings by and large stay within the boundaries created for them by the rulings, the artists of the *Shahnama* frequently responded to being constrained vertically by lines of *nasta'liq* by expanding their images horizontally into the margins. The gold and black rules around the text block must have already been in place when the *Shahnama* paintings were executed, since in several cases it is possible to see that the artists painted right over them.

Third, almost all of the figures in the available *Shahnama* paintings wear Persian clothing. Some wear knee-length front-fastening robes with long sleeves underneath short-sleeved jackets of a different colour, while others simply wear a single long-sleeved knee-length robe. In both cases the figures wear fitted pants underneath their robes. Such garments are ubiquitous in

22 Ibid., chapter 3.



FIGURE 13.3 *Kay Khusrau crosses Lake Zara*. Page: $8 \times 4 \frac{7}{8}$ in. (20.3×12.4 cm); painting: $5 \frac{3}{8} \times 2 \frac{3}{4}$ in. (13.6×7 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Wendy Findlay, 1983 (1982.476.3). Image © The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Shahnama manuscripts produced in Iran and Central Asia in the 16th and 17th centuries.²³

A fourth and final distinction that must be made between the *Pem Nem* and the Bijapur *Shahnama* is that while the *Pem Nem* paintings convey the emotional trajectory of the narrative, the *Shahnama* illustrations represent the actions taken by various characters in the story. In other words, the illustrations in the *Shahnama* serve a different set of functions than do those of the *Pem Nem*. Discussion of individual *Shahnama* miniatures will help to elucidate the significance of these differences in form and function.

The Illustrations

The illustrations discussed in this paper all come from chapters twelve and thirteen in Jules Mohl's edition of the text of the *Shahnama*. These chapters deal with the eventful reigns of Kay Kavus and Kay Khusrav, within which a number of the most commonly illustrated episodes in *Shahnama* manuscripts appear. Some of the Bijapuri *Shahnama* paintings are of scenes that are frequently illustrated: "Rustam drags the Khaqan of Chin from his elephant", "The Div Akvan bearing Rustam away", and "Rustam discovers Suhrab's identity", all of which are illustrated in over 100 known manuscripts.²⁴

Studying dispersed folios from this manuscript in tandem has made it possible to reconstruct the illustrative programme of certain sections of this *Shahnama*. For example, five known illustrations depict episodes from the story of Bizhan and Manizha.²⁵ The close proximity of the text on four of these pages indicates that no painted pages appeared in between them and thus that the images can be considered as a pictorial sequence. The illustrations depict an early portion of the story in which Bizhan and Manizha meet and fall in love despite belonging to rival royal families. The lovers secretly spent some

23 These garments are described in Faegheh Shirazi-Mahajan, *Costumes and textile designs of the Il-Khanid, Timurid and Safavid dynasties in Iran*, chapters 4 and 5.

24 This figure is drawn from the Cambridge Shahnama Project website: <http://shahnama.caret.cam.ac.uk>.

25 This story constitutes chapter 13e according to the alpha-numerical designation proposed by Fritz Wolff in *Glossar zu Firdosis Schahname*. It can be found in French and Persian in Julius Mohl, *Le Livre des Rois*, 111, 293–411.

time together in the palace of the Turanian ruler Afrasiyab (Manizha's father) before being found out, at which point Bizhan is seized and is nearly hanged.²⁶

The first illustration (fig. 13.4) in the series depicts Bizhan killing the wild boar on the borders of Iranian territory, one of the most popular scenes from this part of the *Shahnama*.²⁷ Bizhan is depicted alone, leaning aggressively forward on his mount as he thrusts his sword at the vicious animals before him. His companion, Gurgin, is nowhere to be found. This is not inconsistent with the text, in which Gurgin refuses to assist Bizhan, though most paintings of the scene do depict one or more figures watching from the periphery. Also somewhat unusual is the depiction of Bizhan's horse as a brown and white animal, despite the fact that the horse's name is *Shabrang* (lit. black colour), a fact which most artists acknowledge in their illustrations.

Gurgin is jealous of Bizhan's success in the hunt, and he exacts revenge by luring Bizhan to visit the ladies of the Turanian court who are desporting in a pleasure ground nearby. Bizhan quickly spies Manizha, the most beautiful of them all. The second painting depicts Bizhan and Manizha just after they have met (fig. 13.5). They are shown enjoying themselves inside Manizha's tent in a meadow, a fairly popular subject among illustrators of the *Shahnama*.²⁸ Manizha, on the right, is handing Bizhan a cup of wine. This action nicely foreshadows the cup of wine that she later doses with a sleeping potion and serves to Bizhan so that she can spirit him away to her father's palace.

Manizha's boldness and self-confidence is in evidence here: she gazes directly at her companion with a smile, while Bizhan, looking relatively stern, does not meet his soon-to-be-lover's gaze.²⁹ The illustration displays several of the characteristics mentioned above: it includes the intense reds and oranges and the speckled trees of the *Pem Nem*, but is framed by stepped lines of text and contains figures in Iranian costume.

The text that accompanies this illustration describes a much more intimate and festive encounter than is indicated by the painting, and one can reasonably imagine that if this were a page from the *Pem Nem*, some kind of visual

26 This story and its illustration in manuscripts of the *Shahnama* are examined in detail in a two-part article by Charles Melville, "Text and image in the story of Bizhan and Manizha: I" and "Text and image in the story of Bizhan and Manizha: II", the latter still unpublished.

27 Sixty-one separate depictions of this scene have been documented by the *Shahnama* Project. It is second in popularity only to the scene in which Rustam rescues Bizhan from the pit.

28 Thirty other illustrations of this scene have been documented by the *Shahnama* Project.

29 Melville, "Text and image in the story of Bizhan and Manizha: I", 76, 80, discusses Manizha's bold character and cites other sources on the subject.



FIGURE 13.4 Bizhan killing the wild boar. Page: $8\frac{1}{16} \times 4\frac{3}{4}$ in. (20.6×12.1 cm); painting: $2\frac{1}{2} \times 2\frac{3}{4}$ in. (6.4×7 cm). The Cleveland Museum of Art, Gift in honor of Madeline Neves Clapp; Gift of Mrs. Henry White Cannon by exchange; Bequest of Louise T. Cooper; Leonard C. Hannah Jr. Fund; from the Catherine and Ralph Benkaim Collection (2013.283.a).



FIGURE 13.5 *Manizha entertains Bizhan. Page: 8 × 4 3/4 in. (20.32 × 12.07 cm); painting: 5 1/4 × 2 3/4 in. (13.3 × 6.9 cm). Los Angeles County Museum of Art (M.81.12a). Source: www.lacma.org.*

representation of the lovers' excitement and pleasure would have been included. *Shahnama* miniatures depicting this scene traditionally show Bizhan and Manizha sitting discreetly side by side, however, and only in quite late manuscripts did artists begin to depict the two embracing. It seems clear that the artists of the Bijapuri manuscript elected to follow conventions of *Shahnama* illustration here rather than apply their own locally-generated approach to the scene. This notion is supported by the fact that the painting occurs in the midst of the most common break-line verse associated with illustrations of this scene.³⁰

The text that follows narrates how Manizha, finding herself unwilling to part from her new lover, secretly brings Bizhan back to her father's palace. Soon, word of Bizhan's presence gets back to Afrasiyab, however, and he angrily

30 M, 251; KM, 202; for the concept of the break-line, see Farhad Mehran, "The break-line verse: The link between text and image in the 'First Small' *Shahnama*".

orders Garsivaz to interrupt the lovers' soiree and to arrest Bizhan. The next painting depicts this encounter, an uncommon subject (fig. 13.6).³¹ On the left Garsivaz enters with a guard while on the right Manizha shares a glance with a female companion who touches her shoulder in concern. Bizhan stands in the centre, brandishing his dagger and ready for a fight, but partially undressed and without his shoes on. The image effectively captures the essence of the episode: the shock of catching a heroic warrior unprepared for battle.³²

As the story moves on, Bizhan is brought before Afrasiyab and the angry king condemns him to be hanged (fig. 13.7). Just as the noose is placed around Bizhan's neck, Piran (Afrasiyab's advisor) happens by on horseback. He inquires as to what has happened and listens to Bizhan's story, after which he is able to convince Afrasiyab to imprison Bizhan in a cave rather than having him killed. The moment shown in the third painting, again not one that is very commonly illustrated, shows Piran telling the executioners to halt their work and wait while he goes to plead with Afrasiyab for Bizhan's life.³³

In the Bijapuri illustration, Piran and the executioners look at one another, trying to work out what to do with their captive. The drama is heightened by the fact that although Piran rides a horse, he is no higher up than the executioners, and one doubts that his authority will be enough to get the executioners to halt their deadly work. The erstwhile hero waits helplessly, wearing only the plain white trousers of an innocent victim (not the white *jama* and gold *patka* from the previous painting). Behind the figures is a purple hill spotted with green speckled trees under a golden sky. Although these latter elements reflect Bijapuri conventions, as we have seen, it is clear that in this painting the artists were following well-established compositional precedents of *Shahnama* illustration; in other examples of this scene Bizhan is shown just as he is here: in the middle of the page, standing under the gallows, surrounded by executioners and spectators, some of whom peer in from beyond the horizon.

31 Only two other paintings of this scene are documented by the Shahnama Project.

32 Bizhan's clothing in this illustration seem to be represented as Indian garments: a translucent *jama*, green *pajama* and a gold *patka*. Bizhan does not, however, wear the extra shawl-like garment associated with the Deccan. This appearance of Indian costume is curious as there is no reference to India in the narrative, and in other paintings from this sequence Bizhan wears Persian clothes or underclothes. One possible explanation is that he is represented in Indian dress in order to emphasize that Bizhan, an Iranian, does not belong in the palace of the Turanian King Afrasiyab. It is likely that the paucity of pictorial precedents for this rarely-depicted episode facilitated the artists' sartorial experimentation.

33 Thirteen other depictions of this scene have been documented by the Shahnama Project.



FIGURE 13.6 *Garsivaz arrests Bizhan.* $8 \frac{5}{32} \times 4 \frac{3}{4}$ in. (20.7 × 12.1 cm). The San Diego Museum of Art, Edwin Binney 3rd Collection (1990.437.3).



FIGURE 13.7 *Piran stays the execution of Bizhan. Page: $7 \frac{7}{8} \times 4 \frac{3}{4}$ in. (20×12.1 cm); painting: $5 \frac{3}{16} \times 2 \frac{3}{4}$ in. (13.2×7 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Wendy Findlay, 1983 (1983.354.1). Image © The Metropolitan Museum of Art.*

Based on the illustrations of the Bizhan–Manizha tale up to this point, it is quite likely that the manuscript also included images depicting Bizhan's imprisonment in a pit and Manizha's quest to save him. These images have not yet surfaced. There is, however, a page on which Bizhan's rescue is carried out by Rustam (fig. 13.1). Here we see Rustam preparing to pull Bizhan out of the cave, in the company of Manizha and three soldiers. Next to the bell-shaped pit is the large pink boulder that only Rustam had been able to heave aside. This moment is one the most frequently illustrated episodes in the story of Bizhan and Manizha.

Several tentative conclusions arise from this brief examination of one sequence of illustrations. First, if the Bizhan–Manizha tale is representative of the larger illustrative programme of the manuscript, it would seem that this *Shahnama* was densely illustrated, and that it contained paintings of both popular and unconventional episodes from the text. Second, in most cases the paintings depict the literal meaning of the adjacent or nearby text. Based on their placement and content, it would seem that the illustrations serve as visual representations of specific narrative events rather than as commentaries on or summaries of them. Third, the artists who created the illustrations were aware of conventions of *Shahnama* illustration: the subjects selected for illustration, the placement of illustrations in the text, the iconographic expression of those subjects, and the stepped format of the image all indicate awareness on the part of the artists and scribe of trends in the illustration of *Shahnama* manuscripts. Fourth, the artists consistently incorporated selected local aesthetic conventions into their compositions.

The artists' creativity was not confined, however, to inserting Bijapuri stylistic features into conventional *Shahnama* compositions or to occasionally illustrating scenes that were not commonly depicted. For example, in an illustration of Rustam's first labour, where Rakhsh kills a lion, the artists have taken a relatively original approach to the episode (fig. 13.8). During the 16th and 17th centuries most Persian artists illustrated this story by depicting Rustam stretched out, asleep, in one part of the composition, and Rakhsh fighting the lion in another. These two parts of the painting tend to be separated from one another but given equal attention. In the Bijapuri painting, however, the artists have removed Rustam to the margins of the image, showing him awake and standing behind the horizon, merely a witness to the clash between the two animals. This reorganization of the elements of the miniature allows the animals' fierce battle to dominate the composition: their heads and necks are interlocked, successfully conveying the intensity with which they attack one another. The brilliant shades of their coats and Rakhsh's saddle bring the energy of the scene still higher.



FIGURE 13.8
*Rustam's first labour:
 Rakhsh kills a lion.*
 8 × 4 ½ in. (20.4 × 11.7 cm).
 The San Diego Museum
 of Art, Edwin Binney 3rd
 Collection (1990.437.1).

In much the same way, the artists have amplified the drama of the popular story of Rustam defeating the “Khaqan of Chin” (fig. 13.9), which is almost always represented by a standard composition. All of the expected elements of the story are present in the Bijapur painting: the two heroes are on their mounts, Rustam tugs at the Chinese ruler with his lasso until he begins to fall, head first, off his elephant. Even Rustam’s position follows convention: he twists around in his saddle to hold the lasso as if he were directing a Parthian shot at his enemy. The Bijapuri artists have made one idiosyncratic alteration to the traditional composition, however, depicting



FIGURE 13.9
*Rustam pulls the Khaqan
 of Chin from his elephant.*
 Page: $8 \times 4 \frac{3}{4}$ in. (20.3×12
 cm); painting: $3 \frac{1}{2} \times 3 \frac{5}{8}$
 in. (8.8×9.2 cm). Private
 collection.

the Khaqan's elephant rearing up wildly on its hind legs instead of showing it flat-footed and still, as in virtually all Persian and Central Asian depictions of this scene. As a result the Bijapuri illustration bursts with energy and drama.

Examples such as these reveal that while the Bijapuri artists did not choose to apply the localizing techniques seen in the *Pem Nem* to all elements of their *Shahname* illustrations, it is not sufficient to conclude that they simply copied a Persian *Shahname* manuscript. On the contrary, they made subtle but effective alterations to conventional *Shahname* imagery.

Illustrating the *Shahnama* in India

Although certain common pictorial conventions unite the two manuscripts dealt with above, the Bijapuri artists appear to have felt that the *Pem Nem* and the *Shahnama* called for two different approaches to the conception and execution of illustrations. The approach taken in the *Shahnama* seems to indicate a conception of illustrations as tools for explaining the content and enhancing the drama of the narrative, while the artists of the *Pem Nem* used illustrations to represent underlying themes and emotional content of the text. How can we explain this difference in approach?

One factor is certainly the text itself. As the *Shahnama* is a story of legendary kings, it is full of exciting battles and heroic acts that artists have loved for centuries to depict. This kind of scene has little role in the *Pen Nem*, a narrative in which powerful thoughts and feelings are more prevalent than great deeds. Moralizing passages do appear in the text of the *Shahnama* but they tend not to be illustrated.

Another issue is that the artists had no choice but to create original compositions for the recently-composed text of the *Pem Nem*, but for the *Shahnama* they would have drawn on one or more manuscripts of Firdausi's text. The relatively limited alterations made to conventional *Shahnama* imagery may reflect satisfaction with the illustrations of which they were already aware or ignorance of the deeper meanings of the text.

Another possibility, however, is that the artists chose this mode of illustration because they wanted their manuscript to look like the other copies of the *Shahnama* accessible to them. Visually mimicking other manuscripts of the epic would link the Bijapur manuscript to a long-lasting and respected tradition of the text's illustration in Iran and Central Asia.³⁴ If this was one of the artists' goals, however, then we must wonder at their use of local landscape conventions and other features that link the imagery to a Bijapuri visual vocabulary. Did the artists also intend to endow the manuscript with local resonance? Considering Bijapur's political and cultural ties to Iran and the presence of copies of the *Shahnama* in Bijapur's royal library and in the imagery

34 By the time this manuscript was produced there was also a long-established tradition of *Shahnama* production in India itself, but there are no signs that manuscripts of this kind were known to these artists. There is little evidence of *Shahnama* manuscripts produced in the 15th- or 16th-century Deccan, but imagery in one possible example is quite unrelated to the Bijapur manuscript. See Barbara Brend, "The British Library's *Shahnama* of 1438 as a Sultanate manuscript".

painted on the walls of at least one local monument, the epic may indeed have been absorbed into local elite culture.³⁵

Illustrations of the *Shahnama* produced at the Mughal court also situate the text's age-old stories in a local context.³⁶ This is exemplified by a painting depicting Zal by Rudaba's castle that is likely to have been made around 1580.³⁷ In the image, the artists have situated the events of the story in a Mughal world: Rudaba is positioned before a red sandstone and white marble palace that directly alludes to imperial architecture, the garden from which Zal climbs is reminiscent of contemporaneous paintings of Mughal gardens, and Zal's clothing reflects trends at Akbar's court.³⁸

We see something similar in surviving folios from a *Shahnama* made for Jahangir, believed to have been produced around 1610, such as a painting depicting a battle between Faridun and Zakhak.³⁹ In the upper left of the illustration Faridun raises his cow-headed mace in order to bring it down on evil Zakhak's head. As with the painting of Zal and Rudaba, the setting in which the battle takes place—a courtyard seen from outside a boundary wall—follows a compositional model used frequently to depict events at the Mughal court. It is tempting to imagine that the battle for supremacy between Faridun

35 It would not be the first time that the text or imagery of the *Shahnama* became a screen upon which local messages could be projected. Indeed, Thomas Lentz and Glenn Lowry have argued that “by means of contemporary style and the insertion of specific costume, architecture, and inscriptions, the illustrative programs of the *Shahnama* have historically reflected the attempts of various dynasties to assimilate themselves into the Iranian monarchical tradition.” Thomas W. Lentz & Glenn D. Lowry, *Timur and the princely vision: Persian art and culture in the fifteenth century*, 126. For an example of this phenomenon, see Eleanor Sims, “The illustrated manuscripts of Firdausi’s *Shahnama* commissioned by princes of the house of Timur”.

36 Currently there is no single study that has assembled and reviewed the *Shahnama* paintings that were produced for these rulers. New scholarship on this subject would be extremely valuable.

37 This painting, from the Keir Collection, is reproduced in B.W. Robinson, *Islamic painting and the arts of the book*, pl. 31. For other paintings that may have been made for Akbar-era *Shahnama* manuscripts, see Robert Skelton *et al.*, *Arts of Mughal India*, 36; Roselyne Hurel, *Miniatures & peintures Indiennes*, 1, cat. no. 5; Sunil Sharma, *The production of Mughal Shāhnāmas*, 101–3.

38 For discussion of the garment Zal wears, see Ritu Kumar & Cathy Muscat, *Costumes and textiles of Royal India*, 39, 292. A painting of a similar garden is reproduced as “Babur supervising the Bagh-i-Vafa (Garden of Fidelity) at Kabul”, ca. 1590, in Ebba Koch & Richard André Barraud, *The complete Taj Mahal*, fig. 20.

39 LACMA, M.78.9.5. For a reproduction and discussion, see Pratapaditya Pal, *Indian painting: A catalogue of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art collection*, cat. no. 68.

and Zahhak was being cast by Mughal artists as a contest for their emperor's own throne.

Several art historians have observed, when discussing this latter illustration, that it demonstrates stylistic changes that took place in the early 17th century, when the paintings produced for the Mughals were influenced by a vogue for Persian, specifically Safavid, style.⁴⁰ Some stylistic elements of the image may indeed reflect Safavid conventions, and of course the subject itself is quintessentially Persian. And yet, the artists have clearly filtered the tale through the lens of their own world, a process of cultural appropriation and transformation that extended to their treatment of texts associated with the land over which they ruled, such as the *Mahabharata*, an ancient Sanskrit epic.⁴¹

There is no question that Persian culture was central to Mughal court life in many ways, but Mughal *Shahnama* illustrations show Mughal artists relating to Persian culture on their own terms. In contrast, the Bijapur *Shahnama* pages evince relatively limited attempts to represent the stories of this venerable text through a localized visual language. Their use of certain familiar pictorial motifs and strategies may have rendered the episodes more fully recognizable to a Bijapuri audience, but their boldest alterations to the conventions of *Shahnama* illustration were intended to enhance the drama of the text, not to make it familiar.

To fully consider the implications of and reasons for these differing approaches towards the *Shahnama*, one would need to consider the many surviving non-imperial manuscripts made in Mughal India around 1600. This analysis of the Bijapur *Shahnama* is merely a beginning, a look at a diminutive object that, though it appears somewhat meagre today in its dispersed state, offers a unique opportunity to explore differences in the ways that the *Shahnama* was received across courtly India at the turn of the 17th century. The study of these variations may eventually help to bring greater clarity to our understanding of why and how Persian cultural forms and practices were adapted for use in the early modern Indian subcontinent.

40 Linda York Leach, *Indian miniature paintings and drawings*, 78.

41 Akbar's artists produced a copy of the *Mahabharata* in 1586. See John Seyller, "Model and copy: The illustration of three *Razmnāma* manuscripts".

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Appendix: Pages from the Bijapur *Shahnama*

Part I—Painted Pages

All paintings are opaque watercolor and gold on paper

Subject	Repository	Accession no.	Chapter, break-line verse above and below (Mohl)	References
1. Rustam's first labour: Rakhsh kills a lion	San Diego Museum of Art	1990.437.1	Chapter 12: 316 (before and after)	Unpublished
2. Rustam discovers Suhrah's identity	Metropolitan Museum of Art	1985.404.1	Chapter 12c: 1151, 1152	Haidar, 2015: no. 34
3. Giv finds Kay Khusrau in Turan	Williams College Museum of Art	91.15.61	Chapter 12e: 654, 655	Noey, 1994: no. 15a–b
4. The death of Farud	Metropolitan Museum of Art	1985.405.1	Chapter 13: 595, 596	Haidar, 2015: no. 35
5. Rustam fighting Ashkabus	Private Collection	–	Chapter 13b: 1417, 1418	Sotheby's New York, June 4, 1994, lot 131
6. Rustam lassoing Kamus	Williams College Museum of Art	91.15.62	Chapter 13b: 1573, 1574	Noey, 1994: no. 15a–b
7. Rustam drags the khan of Chin from his elephant	Private Collection	–	Chapter 13c: 722, 723	McInerney, 1982: no. 18b
8. The Div Akvan bearing Rustam away	David Collection	4/2015	Chapter 13d: 110, 111 (skipping over one <i>bait</i> not in Mohl)	Galloway, 2013, no. 23; McInerney, 1982: no. 18a
9. Bizhan killing the wild boar	Cleveland Museum of Art	2013.283.a	Chapter 13e: 137, 139 (skipping over one <i>bait</i> not in Mohl)	Unpublished
10. Manizha entertains Bizhan in the meadows	Los Angeles County Museum of Art	M.81.12a	Chapter 13e: 251 (before and after)	Pal, 1993: no. 97

(cont.)

Subject	Repository	Accession no.	Chapter, break-line verse above and below (Mohl)	References
11. Garsivaz arrests Bizhan in Manizha's apartments	San Diego Museum of Art	1990.437.3	Chapter 13e: 319, 320	Unpublished
12. Piran stays the execution of Bizhan	Metropolitan Museum of Art	1983.354.1	Chapter 13e: 394 (before and after)	Haidar, 2015: no. 36
13. Rustam rescues Bizhan from the pit	Victoria and Albert Museum	IS.75-1993	Chapter 13e, 1174, 1175	Unpublished
14. Gudarz climbs up the mountain to find Piran's body	Williams College Museum of Art	91.15.63	Chapter 13f: 2046, 2048	Noey, 1994: no. 15a–b
15. Kay Khusrau Crosses Lake Zara	Metropolitan Museum of Art	1982.476.3	Chapter 13g: 2016, 2019	Haidar, 2015: no. 37

Part II—Text Pages

	Repository	Accession no.	References
1.	Los Angeles County Museum of Art	M.81.12b	Pal, 1993: no. 97
2.	San Diego Museum of Art	1990.437.2	Unpublished
3.	Asian Art Museum, San Francisco	1990.219	Unpublished
4.	San Diego Museum of Art	1990.437.4	Unpublished
5.	Metropolitan Museum of Art	1982.476.4	Unpublished
6.	Metropolitan Museum of Art	1983.354.2	Unpublished
7.	Metropolitan Museum of Art	1985.404.2	Unpublished
8.	Metropolitan Museum of Art	1985.405.2	Unpublished
9.	Private Collection	—	Christie's New York, March 19, 2013, lot 227
10.	Cleveland Museum of Art	2013.283.b	Unpublished

The Baysunghuri Manuscript in the Malek National Library

*Shiva Mihan*¹

There are two known *Shahnama* manuscripts commissioned by the Timurid prince, Baysunghur. The more famous is preserved in the Tehran Golestan Palace Library, ms. 716; the less well-known is in the National Library of the Malek Museum, ms. 6031. The latter is combined with another work of poetry, the *Khamsa* of Nizami. Both manuscripts are dated AH 833/AD 1430. The Malek manuscript has not attracted much scholarly attention and doubts have been expressed about its authenticity as a product of Baysunghur's library, particularly concerning the two illustrations that are inserted in between the two books of poetry and on two sides of a single folio.

This article explores the question whether the Malek manuscript was produced and illustrated in Baysunghur's library and discusses the provenance of the work. A thorough description of the Malek manuscript, compared where appropriate with the Golestan copy, leads to the conclusion that both texts do indeed have the same origin, but that the Malek manuscript's illustrations cannot date from earlier than the second half of the 19th century.

Introduction

Various branches of the arts flourished under the patronage of the Timurids (9th/15th c.), whose tradition of patronising the arts was established by Timur (ca. 1336–1405). Notwithstanding his innate cruelty and vicious massacres, Timur adopted a very different policy towards scientists, poets, musicians, architects and artists.² He was eager to make his capital the most glorious city on earth in order to show that, in his own words, he had “destroyed the whole

1 I am grateful to Prof. Charles Melville for his helpful comments on this paper; my particular thanks also go to Dr. Barbara Brend and Prof. Robert Hillenbrand for reading an earlier draft.

2 For Timur's conduct toward musicians, see Fasih Khwafi, *Mujmal-i Fasihi*, 1, li–liii, and 143.

world to build up Samarqand.”³ To further his objective, Timur gathered eminent scholars, skilled artisans and craftsmen into his capital from all his conquered territories.⁴

Shahrukh (1377–1447, r. 1405–47) was Timur’s youngest son. Following his victory in the succession struggle that broke out on his father’s death, Shahrukh made Herat his capital, where art and architecture then flourished. Shahrukh’s sons were all given a refined literary education and grew up as bibliophiles.⁵ The most famous was Prince Baysunghur (1399–1433), who was involved in artistic activities from a very young age. He was himself an accomplished poet and calligrapher, as well as an enthusiastic patron of the arts.⁶ He wrote poetry in Persian, as well as in Arabic and Chaghatay Turkish. Examples of his Persian poems still survive. His favourite poetic genre was the *ghazal*, which he deployed to express his romantic emotions.⁷

In his celebrated royal library it is said there were some forty artists, including calligraphers, illustrators, illuminators, ruling-makers and book-binders working under the supervision of the chief librarian, Ja’far Tabrizi (who enjoyed the sobriquet ‘Baysunghuri’).⁸ The royal library, located in the Bagh-i Safid (White Garden), was mainly an atelier consisting of two sections: the *surat-khana* and the *kitabab-khana*.⁹ Places in the library were allocated to many artists from different regions, such as Samarqand, Tabriz, Shiraz, Baghdad and elsewhere. Their work and collaborations resulted in a uniquely rich style, with a very high quality of production. In addition, manuscripts that had been

3 Daulatshah Samarqandi, *Tazkirat al-shu’ara*, 229. According to Sharaf al-Din ‘Ali Yazdi, *Zafarnama*, I, 356, 452, Timur plundered the whole art treasury of Sultan Ahmad Jalayir after defeating him. For a list of the artists Timur transferred from different parts of his empire to Transoxania in order to beautify his capital, see Golombek & Wilber, *The Timurid architecture of Iran and Turan*, 658–63 (Mazandaran); ‘Ali Yazdi, I, 456 (Baghdad), II, 96 (India), II, 242, and Ibn ‘Arab Shah, *Zindigi-i shigift-avar-i Timur*, 165, 314 (Damascus).

4 ‘Ali Yazdi, I, 571, states that Timur had gathered the best architects and craftsmen from Fars, Iraq, Azarbaijan, Dar al-Salam (Baghdad) and elsewhere to his capital city.

5 Binyon *et al.* *Persian miniature painting*, 69; and Gray, *Persian miniature painting*, 85–88.

6 One of the earliest works of scholarship that gives a picture of Baysunghur is Martin, *The miniature painting and painters of Persia*, 35–36.

7 Daulatshah, 295, 351.

8 For more on Ja’far see Rettig, “Ja’far Tabrizi”, 194–217.

9 The *surat-khana* was the atelier of painters, illustrators and illuminators, and the *kitabab-khana* was where copyists and calligraphers worked. For the definition of the two terms and the activities carried out in each place, see Azhand, “Kitabat-khana va surat-khana”, 18–23; see also Roxburgh, *The Persian album*, 135, for the term *kitabab-khana*.

plundered or acquired from other libraries were kept there for artists to transcribe or study. Drawing inspiration from earlier works of art, even if only at times by making close copies, was part of the continuation of artistic traditions.

The books produced in the royal library were very probably selected and commissioned by the prince himself. Baysunghur was attracted to the works of certain Persian poets: Sa'di, Firdausi and Amir Khusrau Dihlavi. He even ordered that the works of Firdausi and Dihlavi be collected so that 'complete' revised editions of their poetry could be made.¹⁰ Thanks to some valuable documentary evidence, Baysunghur's interests in these matters are evident in the surviving works known to have been produced in his *kitabkhana*.

The chief librarian was responsible for preparing a report for the prince on each stage of progress in the projects that had been undertaken. Such reports were entitled '*Arza-dasht*'. A fragment from one such report has survived and contains important information.¹¹ The document, preserved in the Topkapı Palace Library, recounts the projects in progress in the year it was written.¹² From this document we learn that two manuscripts of the *Shahnama* were in the course of production: one was being copied by Ja'far (the Golestan Palace Baysunghuri *Shahnama*; henceforth referred to as GB) and one by Muhammad Mutahhar (the Malek Library's Baysunghuri manuscript; henceforth MB).¹³ The dates given in the colophons of the two manuscripts also confirm that both projects were completed in the same year, 833/1430: the Golestan *Shahnama* in the month of Jumada al-awwal (February) and the Malek manuscript in Sha'ban (May). Ja'far reports that Maulana Muhammad Mutahhar had written 25,000 verses (*bait*s) of the *Shahnama* while he himself had finished three and a half quires of the text. Given that each quire of GB contains eight folios, these statements suggest that when Muhammad Mutahhar had completed nearly half of the *Shahnama*, Ja'far was still at an early point in transcribing his text, with about 5,000 verses.¹⁴ From the '*Arza-dasht*' and the completion date of each manuscript, it can be concluded that the first Baysunghuri *Shahnama*

10 For Baysunghur's interest in the poetry of Amir Khusrau Dihlavi, see Daulatshah, 240.

11 Reproduced in Lentz & Lowry, *Timur and the princely vision*, 160; for a translation of the document, see *ibid.*, 364–65. In my thesis I present a revised translation as part of an in-depth study.

12 Ja'far Tabrizi, '*Arza-dasht*', Istanbul, Topkapı Palace Library, H. 2153, f. 98r. The date is not given, although Parsay Quds (1356/1977), 46, argues for Ramadan 830/July 1427. For further discussion see my forthcoming thesis.

13 For a list of works signed by Ja'far, see Prentice, 'The illustration of Sa'di's poetry', 43, n. 20.

14 See Miḥan, 'On the meaning of a fifteenth-century technical term'.

to be completed was the Malek version (bearing in mind that this manuscript also contained the *Khamsa*) and not, as is widely believed, the Golestan copy.¹⁵

Following the compilation of the new *Shahnama*, Baysunghur intended it to be copied, ornamented and illustrated better than all other copies that existed in the royal library:

Prince Baysunghur sometimes occupied his time in perusal of the *Shahnama* by Firdausi of Tus, who pierced a sparkling pearl (or a pearl of Dari) in versifying it. Even though numerous *Shahnamas* were disposed in the imperial library, they were not so refined as to be pleasing to the subtle disposition and elegant nature of the king and prince.... The royal order was received that one of the several copies should be edited and brought to completion.¹⁶

Evidently, the prince was very precise with his expectations of the different sections to be covered in the Preface:

... and in the Preface (*dibacha*) [he commanded that it should include] the story of the collation of the *Bastan-nama*, which is the original source of the *Shahnama*; and of the many poets who were involved in versifying the text until that time when they agreed on Firdausi; Firdausi's finishing the *Shahnama* and his despair and disappointment at Sultan Mahmud and the [satirical] verses he composed reproaching Sultan Mahmud; in addition to the oral stories about Firdausi's life; as well as a chart reflecting the chronology of the Persian kings and their lineage from Kayumars to Yazdjird, to be written in accordance with the lofty command. Thus was this Preface composed.¹⁷

The two known copies both contain this famous Preface, completed in 829/1426, and the new recension of the text.¹⁸ The Preface was very probably composed by the Timurid historian, Hafiz i Abru (b. 1360s–d. 1430), who was

15 The MB manuscript as a whole would have to wait three more months for completion, because the *Khamsa* remained a work in progress. The *Shahnama* (Baysunghur's edition) consists of less than 60,000 verses and the *Khamsa* is around 30,000 verses; the former occupies 331 folios (pages 14–676) in the MB codex and the latter, 167 folios (pages 678–1012).

16 The Baysunghuri *Shahnama*, Golestan Palace Library, ms. 716 (GB), Preface, page 9.

17 GB, Preface, page 9. For a study of Firdausi's satirical verses about Sultan Mahmud, see Khatibi, *Aya Firdausi Mahmud-i Ghaznavi ra hajv guft?*

18 Olga Davidson applies the term 'recension' for the edited text of the *Shahnama* under Baysunghur and discusses the legitimacy of the term by giving references to its Preface. See Davidson, "Why the Bāysonghori recension is a recension", 127–30.

then serving at Baysunghur's court.¹⁹ The main theme of the Preface is an explanation of the provenance of the text and the genesis of the *Shahnama*, adorned with a few phrases lauding its patron.²⁰ The Prefaces of the two copies are not identical, but no detailed textual or comparative study has been done either on the Preface or the text. I address this question in detail in my PhD thesis, where I compare the two Prefaces comprehensively and highlight the major differences.²¹ In his article cited below, Khoddari Naeini has looked at the prefaces of GB and MB and commented on only one additional passage in the Malek copy that is missing in the Golestan one.

Although both manuscripts were completed in the same year (833/1430) and share basically the same text, they are very different as far as their illustrations are concerned. Not only is the Golestan Baysunghuri *Shahnama* more profusely illuminated; it also contains twenty-one illustrations, whereas the Malek Baysunghuri manuscript has only two. The latter has only been referred to very briefly in a few articles.²²

In this article, I will concentrate on the Malek Baysunghuri dual-text manuscript, not only because it is a less well-known contemporary production of Baysunghur's library, but also for the comparisons it allows with GB.

The authenticity of the Malek manuscript and its illustrations has often been doubted. For instance, Abolala Soudavar assumed the illustrations to be later additions in his article, "From Astara to Astaneh", but since this issue was peripheral to his subject, he did not clarify when he believed they were added.²³ He briefly mentioned a forger who was known to have been successful in making undetectable forgeries but he did not discuss this matter further.²⁴ In his recent book he argues that the illustrations of MB are 20th-century additions and he explicitly mentions a family of famous forgers and their operations to

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- 19 For a discussion of the identity of the author, see Bayani, "*Shahnama*-yi Baysunghuri va Hafiz-i Abru", 157–82; Melville, "Ali Yazdi and the *Shāhnāma*", 118–19; and my forthcoming thesis, where I have a full discussion of the Baysunghuri Preface.
 - 20 Olga Davidson, who has studied the Baysunghuri Preface from different points of view in several articles, has also translated the Preface, though she has not published it yet. Among her published works, see for example Davidson, "Interweaving of book and performance in the making of the *Shāhnāma* of Ferdowsi", 1–11.
 - 21 It is worth noting here that the Juki *Shahnama* contains an almost identical text to the GB Preface.
 - 22 Lentz, "Painting at Herat", 424, where he also refers to Grube, "The Spencer and the Gulestan Shah-Nama", 21 and Sims, "Prince Bāysunghur's *Chahar Maqaleh*", 379, n. 12; Roxburgh, "Baysunghur's library", 21.
 - 23 See also Hillenbrand, "Exploring a neglected masterpiece", 109, n. 40, where he mentions the dubious authenticity of the endpiece paintings of the *Shahnama* in MB.
 - 24 Soudavar, "From Astara to Astaneh", 254–68.

'enhance' manuscripts, a family who were very likely responsible for MB's additions too.²⁵ Thomas Lentz, on the other hand, believes that the two illustrations in MB were added subsequently and probably in the 17th century, though he does not give a clear reason for his deduction.²⁶ He refers to the Spencer *Shahnama* as being similarly an imitation of the Herat school and, in particular, in the Baysunghuri style.²⁷ The Spencer *Shahnama* was produced in 1023/1614 and half of its forty-four illustrations have a counterpart in GB, while the rest are composed in the same style and sometimes like a collage of the parts found in GB's paintings to build up iconographical and compositional similarities. Some pictorial elements are closely copied from GB's illustrations. The Spencer illustrations have been shown to have been added no earlier than 1825 and quite possibly even in the early 20th century; however, its aesthetic and artistic style are different from those of MB's illustrations.²⁸

MB has been the subject of two recent studies: one by Saeid Khoddari Naeini,²⁹ and the other by Sayyid 'Abd al-Majid Sharifzadeh.³⁰ Sharifzadeh believes that MB's illustrations were made at the same library as those of GB. He provides exhaustive comparisons of the illustrations of MB and GB, as well as several other manuscripts, and concludes that since the close similarities are undeniable, both of them are definitely original Herati productions. Khoddari Naeini refers to Soudavar's article for the view that the authenticity of the manuscript is dubious, though he considers that further investigations are needed. Elsewhere he points out that a couple of spelling mistakes on the second illustration were made by the scribe, Muhammad Mutahhar, which could only be possible if the painting were original. He points to minor variations in wording between the two texts and spelling errors, and he compares the rulings and two of the colour tones in MB and GB. Yet apart from a few general observations, he does not look into the illustrations or the authenticity of the manuscript in detail. He concentrates mainly on the prefaces of the two books (GB & MB), and describes the *kufic* text of their inscriptions.

25 Soudavar, *Reassessing early Safavid art and history*, 85–86.

26 Lentz, 127.

27 New York Public Library, Spencer Collection, Spencer Pers. ms. 2.

28 See Gray, *Persian painting*, 88 and Schmitz, *Islamic manuscripts in the New York Public Library*, 105–11; also Hillenbrand, 109.

29 Khoddari Naeini, "The *Shahnama* of Baysonghor in the Malek Library", unpublished paper delivered at the *Shahnama* conference in Cambridge in December 2007. I am most grateful to the author for sharing the early draft of his paper.

30 Sharifzadeh, *Du nigara*.

Because no fuller comparisons have yet been conducted, and the question of originality remains open, it is important to try to determine if MB and its illustrations are indeed from the atelier of Baysunghur, whether wholly or in part. With this aim in mind, I will first describe the physical features of MB, and then investigate the authenticity of its two illustrations. Since GB is known to be a genuine product of Baysunghur's royal library, comparing the artistic features of MB with those of GB will help to determine whether the style and visual elements are from the same atelier. Tracing the identity of the court personages depicted in one of the illustrations, by referring to contemporary historical sources, will also provide evidence for the question of the authenticity of the picture and allow scope for valid speculation about when the paintings were added to the manuscript.

Physical Description of the Manuscript

The Codex

The Baysunghuri manuscript of the Malek Library contains two of the most popular poems in Persian literature: the *Shahnama* of Firdausi and the *Khamasa* of Nizami. At the end of each book there is a colophon with the signature of the scribe, Muhammad Mutahhar. The original manuscript consists of 508 folios (506 text folios); the manuscript has been paginated and contains 1012 numbered pages, measuring 343 × 235 mm. The size of the text frames is 255 × 175 mm and the text is arranged in 6 columns and 31 rows per page, written in fine *nasta'liq* script. These dimensions and the rulings are the same in both parts.

The folios are of thick creamy paper of a high quality, classified in the category of *Tirma* paper, which was widely produced in Samarqand,³¹ whereas the paper of GB is classified as Khan Baligh. They are also different in colour: GB's paper is buff-coloured, but the paper of MB lacks the yellowish-ochre tone and is paler. The paper and the hand of the calligrapher remain the same throughout both parts of the codex: this confirms that from the outset it was intended to be a dual-text manuscript, not separate books. The manuscript contains 10 illuminated pages in the Herat style and two illustrations at the end of the *Shahnama*. The implications of these facts will be discussed below.

31 High quality paper production in Samarqand dates back at least to the late 10th and early 11th centuries. See Tha'alibi, *Lata'if al-ma'arif*, 261. Also see Bloom, *Paper before print*, 68, on the superb paper manufactured in the 15th century under the Timurids.

The Bindings

The two combined books in MB have a later binding decorated and illustrated in the manner of the Qajar School. It can be conjectured from the traces on the flyleaves at the end of the codex that the original cover carried a small medallion (*shamsa*) on its envelope flap and the doublure seems to have been decorated in the centre with a pointed oval (*turanj*). The first folio of the codex, before being re-bound in the Qajar period, shows that it had suffered from the



FIGURE 14.1 *Malek National Library, ms. 6031, p. 1014. Flyleaf, showing the mark of the flap. All photos of this and the Golestan Palace Library ms. are taken by the author, with permission.*

lack of a cover for a long time. Not only did this result in the dirt on the first page of the first folio, but it also created an abrasion of the pigments of the *shamsa* before rebinding.

The binding measures 348 × 242 mm and is adorned with lacquer paintings on papier-mâché, on both the cover and the doublure at both ends of the book. The lacquer paintings on the cover depict birds and flowers framed by four corner pieces within a rectangular frame adorned with floral patterns. The background is covered with golden particles (most likely flecks of gold leaf). The borders are decorated with semi-geometric patterns and dots. The palette includes variations of red, different shades of green, pale yellow, gold and black; however, red is the dominant hue.

The Doublures

Inside the covers there are two illustrations of Rustam's combats in the *Shahnama*. The painting inside the front board depicts the scene "Rustam shoots Isfandiyar in the eyes" (fig. 14.2), while the one at the end shows "Rustam in combat with Ashkabus" (fig. 14.3). Battle scenes (*razm*) and landscapes were popular subjects to illustrate in the Qajar period. The statistics in the Cambridge Shahnama Project database reveal that "Rustam shoots Isfandiyar in the eyes" is one of the most heavily illustrated episodes in all *Shahnama* manuscripts recorded to date.³² The same subject in a similar format and style is repeatedly seen in the paintings of this period, which are characterized by the recession of the landscape, and by the modelling of the figures and their facial features.³³

The picture on the front doublure has a simple compositional structure and a limited colour range (see fig. 14.2). On the second plane, eleven figures (either horsemen or infantrymen) on both sides of the composition form a horizontal line. Five figures are on each side with an additional royal character on the right. Sitting on a horse in front of other soldiers, he is shown larger than the others. With a bejewelled Qajar crown on his head, he is the only person who really watches the combat. The other figures, his courtiers and soldiers, do not observe the climax of the action, but are all looking at the prince, who holds his right hand on his heart as a sign of his emotion at the scene. Possibly, he

³² <http://shahnama.caret.cam.ac.uk/>

³³ For instance, Library of Parliament, Tehran, ms. 13217, has a lacquer binding with flower and bird motifs, while on the doublure the same scenes—though of a higher artistic quality—are illustrated. It is dated 1267/1851. Another manuscript with similar binding is in St Petersburg, National Library of Russia (PNS 394), dated 1253/1837. Both examples were made close to Farhad Mirza's acquisition of MB (1248 AH).

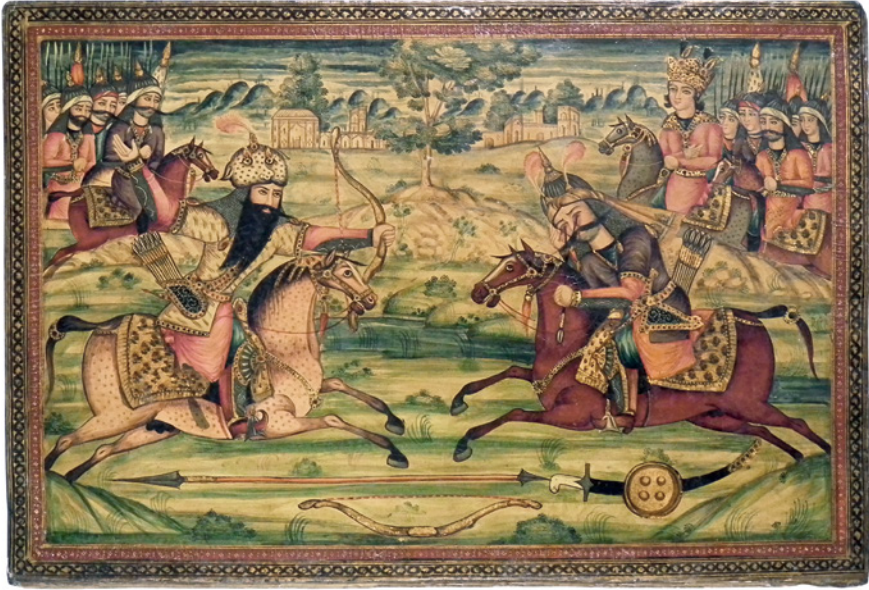


FIGURE 14.2 *Rustam shoots Isfandiyar in the eyes. Malek National Library, ms. 6031, upper doublure.*



FIGURE 14.3 *Rustam in combat with Ashkabus. Malek National Library, ms. 6031, lower doublure.*

is the owner of the codex who commissioned the new binding. Either way, the portrait is more an idealisation originating from the painter's imagination, rather than a realistic picture of Persian soldiers in the middle of the 19th century. The painting is mainly in shades of green and red,³⁴ as well as ochre, touches of gold and black. Red and green were among the most widely used colours in Qajar art, which otherwise had a limited palette.³⁵

The doublure at the end of the book contains the combat between Rustam and the Turanian champion, Ashkabus, a similarly highly popular story with illustrators. The picture is very similar to the first doublure in terms of its compositional structure, the colouring, frame, the figures and their clothing. The two large characters who appear in this illustration are probably the army commanders. The crowned royal character is not present here.

The Scribe

The name of the scribe is contained in the colophons at the end of each section of the book. On page 676, where the *Shahnama* ends, the calligrapher signs his name as Muhammad ibn Mutahhar al-Nisaburi.³⁶ No date is given until his signature is provided again on the last folio of the manuscript, page 1012. Here he signs himself as Muhammad ibn Mutahhar ibn Yusuf ibn Abi Sa'id al-Qazi al-Nisaburi. He records that he finished the manuscript in Sha'ban 833/May 1430. The presence of the date in the second colophon and not in the first proves the manuscript was intended from the beginning to consist of both poems, and they were not subsequently bound together.

The scribe's *nasta'liq* style is similar to Ja'far Baysunghuri's but does not attain the same level of mastery. Since *nasta'liq* was only developed a few decades earlier, their handwriting stems from an early stage in the evolution of the script. Before copying MB, Muhammad ibn Mutahhar was involved in writing for other projects, such as a dual-text manuscript containing the *Zafarnama* of Shami and the *Zayl-i Zafarnama* by Hafiz Abru, finished in 828/1425,³⁷ and the

34 The red that is applied in the paintings of the cover is vermillion (*shangarf/shanjarf*), which has always been a key hue in Persian art, from paintings to rugs.

35 These colours are also considered to be important to Firdausi and appear repeatedly in the *Shahnama*. For the frequency of use of colours and the symbols they convey, see Hassanli & Ahmadian, "Baznimud-i rang-ha", 23–29. The same authors have another article on the function of black and white in the *Shahnama*, see Hassanli & Ahmadian, "Karkard-i rang dar Shahnama", 143–66.

36 Nishapur (Nishapur), a city located in Khurasan, was Arabicized as Nisabur.

37 Nuruosmaniye Library, Istanbul, ms. 3267.

Kulliyat of Khwaju Kirmani in 829/1426.³⁸ A comparison between the scripts of these manuscripts displays the consistency of the scribe's hand.

The writing style and the hand of the copyist remain the same throughout the whole of MB. The above discussion suggests that the recorded date and the identity of the calligrapher are genuine; as a result, we can discount the possibility that the text element of MB is a later production.

Notes, Seals and Illuminations

The manuscript is paginated in pencil on the top right corner of the verso pages, starting with number 1 on folio 2v. Therefore, folios 1r, 1v and 2r are excluded from the pagination. It is illuminated on the following pages: folio 2r, pages 1, 14 and 15 of the *Shahnama* and pages 678, 679, 705, 783, 835, and 893 of the *Khamasa*.

On the first flyleaf (f. 1r) two passages are written in a fine *shikasta* script. The first is a short note on Baysunghur's personality and death, and the second is about the acquisition of the manuscript.

هو//.

میرزا بایسنغر پسر شاهرخ است در صبح شنبه هفتم جمادی الاولی سنه ۸۳۷ در هرات در باغ سفید وفات یافت نعلش او را بشهر هرات آورده در مدرسه گوهرشاد اغا مدفون شد مدت حیات میرزا بایسنغر سی و هفت ۳۷ سال و ۴ ماه بود بسیار شاهزاده با کمال بود همیشه سفرراً و حضراً با ارباب کمال و علم مجالست داشت و مجلس او از ادبا و فضلا مشحون بود عیبی که داشت این بود که بشرب شراب ناب شغف و شعف تمام داشت و از ادمان شراب در جوانی وداع زندگانی نمود و باقی احوال او در دولت شاهرخ در تواریخ مسطور است یکی از فضلا مادّه تاریخ وفات را خوب گفته

سلطان سعید بایسنغر سخرم

گفتا که بگو باهل عالم خبرم

من رفتم و تاریخ وفاتم این است

بادا بجهان عمر دراز پدرم

۸۳۷

والسلام

Part of the first note about Baysunghur's death is adopted directly from Khwandamir's text.³⁹

The second note reads:

هو.//
 دخل فی نوبتی وانا العبد العاصی طالب الرّشاد قليل الحظّ كثير الجهد فرهاد بن وليعهد
 بن فتحعلی شاه قاجار طاب الله ثراهما و جعل الله الجنة مثواهما فی ۳ جمادی الاولى
 ۱۲۹۶ هجرى
 امروز اول سال ۶۴ ناقصه قمری من است که لفظ دین است خدا انشاءالله دین را از
 شر شیطان لعین حفظ فرماید بحق محمد و آله الطاهرين

The seal under the second note bears a title: Mu'tamad al-Daula. This reveals that the writer of both notes as well as the owner of the book in the 19th century was Farhad Mirza (b. 1233/1818, Tabriz—d. 1305/1888, Tehran). He was 'Abbas Mirza's son and the grandson of Fath'ali Shah Qajar (r. 1176/1797–1213/1834). Farhad Mirza was a poet, a well-educated scholar, the author of several books and a few translations and had excellent Arabic and English.⁴⁰ As a bibliophile, he was very much interested in collecting Islamic manuscripts (Persian and Arabic) and had organized a splendidly rich library.⁴¹ He had a great passion for the *Shahname* and wished there were religious elegies in the same metre.⁴²

To investigate the validity of attributing the seal and note to him, his hand in another note was examined. The notes of Farhad Mirza and his seal are found on the first page of a Qur'an by Yaqut, dated 688/1289, now in the Paris National Library (Arabe 6716). His note indicates that the Qur'an was bestowed on him by his father 'Abbas Mirza and that he gave it to his son, Ihtisham al-Mulk.

هو.//
 این قرآن را بنورچشمی احتشام الملک نیاز کردم

39 Khwandamir, III, 623.

40 For more information on his life and achievements, see Navvab Safa, *Sharh-i hal*, 325–28.

41 His library was scattered after his death, although part of it was inherited by his grandson, Farhad Mahmud Mu'tamad. See Farzanehpur & Danishpazhuh, "Fihrist-i kitabkhana-yi Farhad Mahmud Mu'tamad", III, 141–276.

42 Bastani Parizi, *Nay-i haft band*, 668.

که بسلامتی اش هر ماه مبارک رمضان یک ختم قرآن برای ولیعهد مرحوم هدیه
بفرستد
۷ شهر رمضان المبارک سنه ۱۳۰۲ هجری

Although the seals are not the same—one gives his name (Farhad) and the other his sobriquet (Mu‘tamad al-Daula)—the way certain words or letters are written strongly suggests that they are both in the same hand.

The other seal that appears at the bottom of certain folios of MB (e.g. on page 17) is read ‘Muhammad Husain’, which belongs to the museum founder, Hajj Muhammad Husain Malik.

On the second folio (2r) two short notes and the library stamp appear. At the top left corner, the number 167 is written, which was probably the registration number in Mu‘tamad al-Daula’s collection. The other note in *shikasta* script gives a name and a date: *al-‘abd al-‘asi Muhammad Mahdi al-Sururi* (?) *bih tarikh-i shahr-i Shawwal 1274* (May 1858), which seems to be a note of MB’s registration in a collection. A note provides the date of cataloguing: 5/5/28 (26 July 1949), while the Malek Library stamp provides the date: 17 Khurdad 1331 (6 June 1952).

In the middle of the folio is an illuminated medallion (*shamsa*) in the Herat style (fig. 14.4). The diameter is 85 mm and with the ray lines (*sharafas*) 185 mm. The title of the book and the name of the author are written in white *riqa’* script on a flower with six petals in the middle.

شهنامه از گفتار
فردوسی طوسی
رحمة الله عليه

This *shamsa* is very similar to the *shamsa* of the *Kalila va Dimna*, dated 833/1429, preserved at the Topkapı Palace Library, ms. R. 1022, in respect of the floral and arabesque (*islîmî*) motifs, the design, and the composition of the aesthetic elements. As with MB, the *shamsa* of the *Kalila va Dimna* presents only the title of the book in the centre. However, the quality and accuracy of the calligraphy is visibly different, which means MB’s title must have been added or at least retouched subsequently. The rim between the two circles is decorated with intertwined patterns that are widely used in Timurid arts of the book and are frequently found in other productions made under Baysunghur.

The Preface starts on folio 2v (page 1; from this point pages are numbered) with an illuminated inscription (*sarlauh*) in which is written in Arabic in white *kufic* script: “In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful, and from

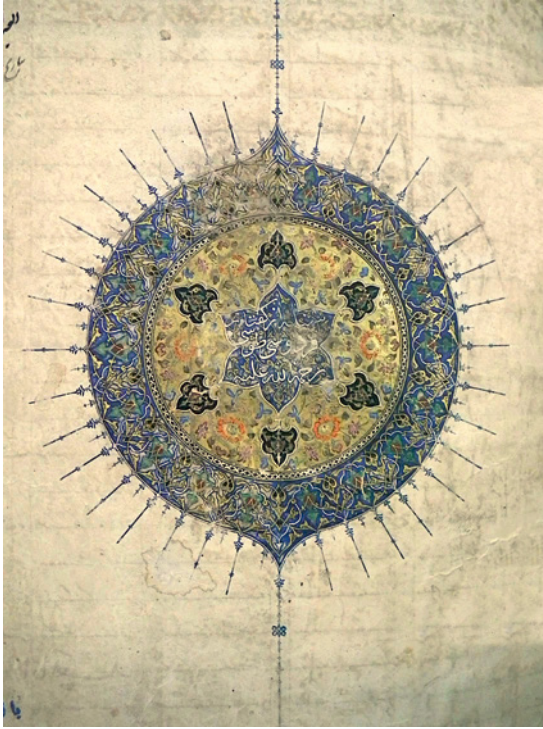


FIGURE 14.4 The shamsa at the start of the *Shahnameh*.
Malek National Library, ms. 6031, f. 2r
(detail).

Him we seek help.” The base is painted in ultramarine blue and decorated with the familiar Timurid *islimis* that were a popular motif of the Herat style (fig. 14.5). Floral patterns painted on a gold base surround the *kufic* note. The Baysunghuri Preface finishes on page 13 and the text of the *Shahnameh* begins on page 15.

On page 14, the *ex libris* appears on a gilded background ornamented with green *islami* patterns (fig. 14.6). The text, located at the heart of a pointed oval (*turanj*), reads:

برسم خزانة الكتب السلطان الاعظم الخاقان الاعدل الاكرم قهرمان الماء والطین
ظل الله فی الارضین غیاث السلطنة و الدنیا و الدین بایسنغر بهادر خان خلد الله مملکته
و سلطانه



FIGURE 14.5 Start of the Baysunghuri Preface. Malek National Library, ms. 6031, f. 2v.

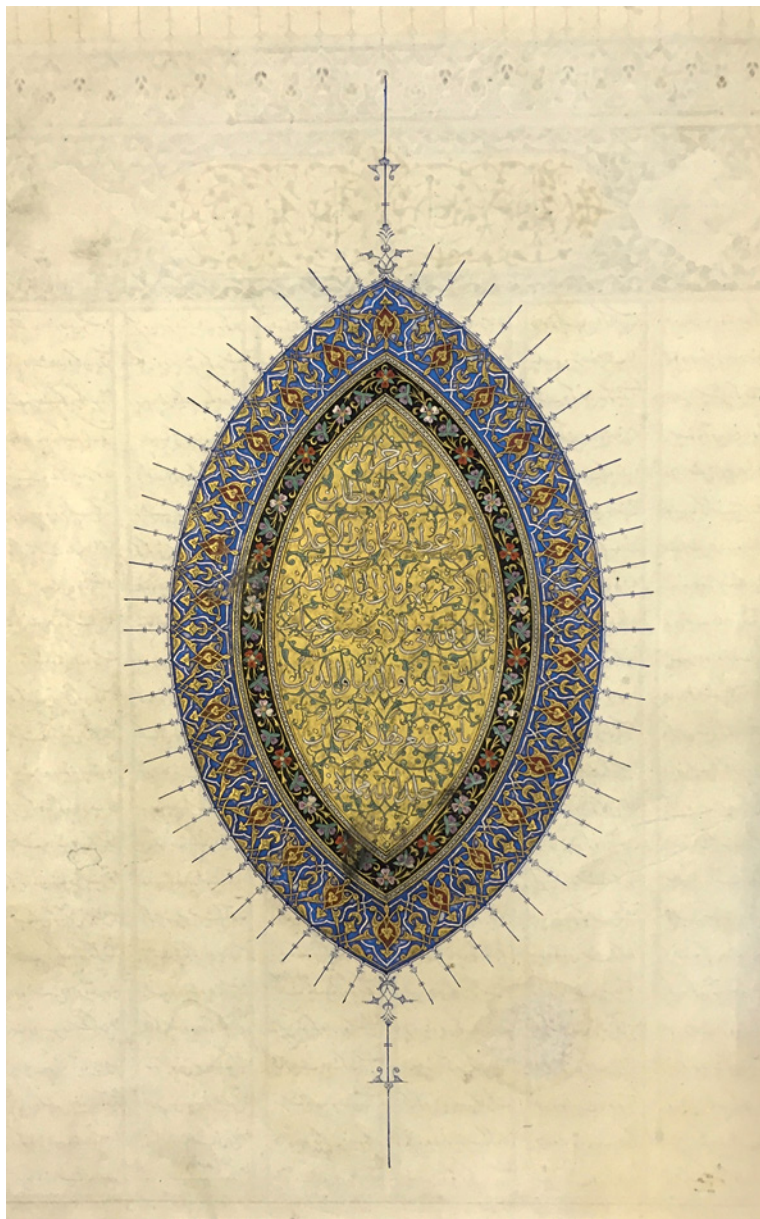


FIGURE 14.6 Ex libris. *Malek National Library, ms. 6031, p. 14.*

The *ex libris* comes after the Preface and not before it (at the beginning of the book) and is in the shape of a pointed oval, which is not seen in other Baysunghuri productions I have examined. Its lapis blue hue differs slightly from that of the two *shamsas*, although it is similar to the blue colour applied to some of the *sarlauhs*. The decorations are executed very precisely, but the hand of the illumination is slightly different from the rest.⁴³ Abolala Soudavar points out the unusual wording of the text and concludes it is a later addition. He argues the word '*mamlikat*' ('geographical country') is misused in place of '*mulk*' ('kingdom') in the inscription of the *ex libris*.⁴⁴ In no other *ex libris* of Baysunghur's library is the word *mamlikat* found: they only ever contain prayers for Baysunghur's kingdom, using the phrase *khallada Allahu mulkahu*. The only other instance of the word *mamlikatahu* is found on the flap spine inscription of the binding enclosing a dual-text Baysunghuri manuscript in the Yeni Cami Library, ms. 937.⁴⁵

اللهم خلد دولة السلطان الاعظم * بايسنغر بهادر خان خلد الله مملكته

Given the unprecedented pointed oval shape of MB's *ex libris* and its peculiar placement, as well as the correctly highlighted point of unusual wording by Abolala Soudavar, it is conceivable that the *ex libris* is not a Baysunghuri execution, but if it were a later addition it could not be an addition of the same time as the illustrations; first, because of the precision of the rendering and execution and second, because of the correct spelling of the name Baysunghur.

The text of the *Shahnama* begins on page 15, preceded by an inscription on a sumptuously adorned *sarlauh* (fig. 14.7). As in all other inscriptions in the manuscript, the script is *kufic* and is written in white. From this point onwards, all the illuminations of the *sarlauhs* and rubrics were certainly worked at Baysunghur's library. The rubrics are plain, unadorned and in *riqa'* script throughout the manuscript. The *Shahnama* ends on page 676, where the first colophon appears.

The *Khamisa* or *Panj Ganj* (Five Treasures) makes up the second part of the manuscript. The poet, Nizami (d. 1209 in Ganja), composed five long epic poems in *masnavi* form (rhyming distiches). The *Khamisa* begins with an elaborate medallion on page 678 (fig. 14.8), bearing an inscription in gold *riqa'*,

43 One key difference is in the details of the brush strokes and the way colour was applied in the floral decorations.

44 Soudavar, *Reassessing early Safavid art*, 86.

45 Containing *Kunuz al-wadi'a* and *al-Faraj ba'd al-shidda*. For a comprehensive study of the manuscript see Mihan, "Hidden from scholarly eyes for a century".



FIGURE 14.7 Sarlauh at the start of the text. Malek National Library, ms. 6031, p. 15.



FIGURE 14.8 Shamsa at the start of the Khamsa. Malek National Library, ms. 6031, p. 678.

introducing the book: 'the *Khamṣa* of Nizami, may peace be upon him'. The visual elements and execution are consistent with those of other Baysunghuri productions. There are two marks of red paint on the top of the page that are likely to have occurred when the painting on the opposite page (p. 677) was in progress.

Each epic begins with an illuminated *sarlah*. Since the last poem, the *Iskandar-nama*, comes in two parts, there are six *sarlahs* in total.⁴⁶ The patterns and structure used in the decorations are very similar, yet each inscription has distinctive features such as slight changes in the geometric shapes that form the space for initial words of each part, the colour of the background, or the colour of the enveloping contours.

The illuminations of the inscription boxes of the *sarlahs* are in the same style as the illuminations of GB and other Baysunghuri productions, regarding the visual ingredients, exuberant manner of execution, the quality of pigments and the colour scheme. Although the motifs are not identical, they include similar components and are as elaborately done, so there is little doubt about them being contemporary to the manuscript itself and original works of Baysunghur's atelier. The *Khamṣa* ends on page 1012, where the second colophon gives more complete details of the scribe and the finishing date, as already noted. On the left margin of the colophon another note by Farhad Mirza gives the date of production and Baysunghur's death. The manuscript has two flyleaves at the end with the offset of the original binding's flap on them (see fig. 14.1).

The Illustrations

There are only two illustrations throughout the whole manuscript, executed on the recto and verso of one folio, pages 676 and 677, just prior to the start of the *Khamṣa*. These two images have been the main reason to question the authenticity of the manuscript. The illustrations are believed by some scholars to be fake reproductions of the early Herat school that were inserted subsequently.⁴⁷ By contrast, Sharifzadeh believes that the pictures were produced in the library of Baysunghur at the same time or at the latest a few years after his death.⁴⁸

46 These are transcribed by Khoddari Naeini, 6.

47 See above, nn. 23–25.

48 'Sayyid Abd al-Majid Sharifzadeh, personal communication, April 2014, Iran Cultural Heritage and Handicrafts Organization, Tehran. See also Sharifzadeh, *Du nigara*, 102–25.

There are some examples of painting on both sides of a folio in Timurid books, but they are not common.⁴⁹ Indeed, it was not a fashion in Baysunghur's library. This reinforces the idea that the addition of images was a project conceived outside the library. If it had been planned to illustrate the manuscript at the inception of the work, there should have been some space reserved for paintings, whereas there are no internal breaks in either text. Our manuscript could be merely one of several copies of the newly compiled 'standard' edition of the *Shahnama* produced for the library of the prince. It was presumably combined with the *Khamsa* because of the importance of Nizami's epics at that period and also because the two works are in *masnawi* form and share common narratives.⁵⁰

It is not possible to give a precise date for the addition of the images. The only way to decide on this issue with certainty is through laboratory tests. Meanwhile, in the absence of this possibility at the moment, an analysis of the illustrations allows some deductions about when they were added.

Firdausi in Paradise

The first image occurs on page 676, in the blank space below the colophon (fig. 14.9). It is a tinted drawing that looks like an unfinished painting, depicting the poet in Paradise. The painter chose to use pale colours either to convey a spiritual scene for this page, or so as not to affect the illustration on the reverse. Comparing it with a sketch from the Diez Albums (Suhrab fights Gurdafarid),⁵¹ which although a detailed drawing is nonetheless clearly unfinished, the level of detail in Firdausi's portrait, the gold outlines on the clothes and the two inscriptions in gold all suggest that it is a finished piece.⁵² The pale glaze-like colours, which give a spiritual atmosphere to the scene, belong to a technique and tints called *ruhi*, ('spiritual' or 'ghostly') in Persian art.

The landscape represents paradise as described in Islamic belief. According to several verses of the Qur'an, Allah has promised believers gardens beneath

49 For other examples of paintings on two sides of a folio, see Melville, "Serial killers", 73–107.

50 There are a few other manuscripts containing both the poems, i.e. the *Shahnama* and *Khamsa*. One of them was commissioned in 823/1420 by Ibrahim Sultan with a dedication to Baysunghur on f.1r, and is housed in the Berlin Museum of Islamic Art, 1. 4628 (it is an anthology that includes some other works of poetry). A similarly early example is Ms. 1111 in the library of the Centre for the Great Islamic Encyclopaedia, Tehran (facs. text published in 2000). Here, the *Khamsa* is written in the margins.

51 Diez A, Fol. 73, S. 70, no. 1, Staatsbibliothek, Berlin; see Eleanor Sims' entry in Gonnella & Rauch, *Heroic times*, 137, fig. 56.

52 To compare it with an unfinished painting from the same school and period, see Diez A. Fol. 72, S. 18, no. 4, which is a drawing with a primary layer of tint.

FIGURE 14.9 *Firdausi in Paradise. Malek National Library, ms. 6031, p. 67r.*

which rivers flow, and wherein they abide eternally in pleasant dwellings.⁵³ Similar descriptions of paradise (*firdaus*) can be found in other Qur'anic verses. Some of them are about the gardens of paradise (*jannat*) with trees and flowers and streams of honey, wine or milk.⁵⁴ In several other verses there is an indication of the palaces, settlements and Elysian houses prepared for believers.⁵⁵

To illustrate a garden, Persian painters were inspired by the ancient tradition of Persian gardens as well as the Qur'anic texts. One of the most outstanding Shi'a Qur'anic commentaries is *Raud al-jinan wa rauh al-janan* (*The cool breeze of Paradise and [God's] breath for the soul*). Written in the 12th century by Khaza'i Nishaburi, known as Abu'l-Futuh al-Razi, it is the most comprehensive and one of the earliest extant interpretations (*tafsir*) of the Qur'an in the Persian language. In his description of paradise based on the Qur'an, it is said that the settlements are located on the highest levels of paradise and rivers flow beneath them.⁵⁶ It is the basis for the design of all heavenly landscapes in Persian art. The illustration of 'Firdausi in Paradise' that is inspired by the preceding images seems to be loyal to the description of paradise in Islamic sacred texts.

In the illustration, the foreground is adorned with blossoming foliage that continues along the river. Most of the picture is dominated by the verticals of the buildings and trees. This alignment is reinforced by the vertical direction of the text boxes. The outlining of the buildings is executed in the same manner as the rulings of the manuscript. Ignoring the left side of the left-hand building, the rest of the composition is quite symmetrical. The minor variations are the figures, the arch on the balcony on the right hand terrace and the words written on the roofs. The name of the poet is written above his head: 'Firdausi, mercy upon him' *فردوسی علیه الرحمہ*, while the word 'paradise' *بهشت* is written on the other rooftop to introduce the landscape. Both are in *nasta'liq* script of the same size as used in the main body of the text, yet with a different calligraphic quality.

A keen eye as well as familiarity with the principles of Persian calligraphy is required to judge the originality of the script of the two additions. First of all, the word 'Firdausi' is written incorrectly with an extra *dandana*. It is not conventional in *nasta'liq* to join the letter *س* to *ی* as here (i.e. long *س* without

53 al-Tauba: 72.

54 al-'Imran: 198; al-Nisa: 57; al-Ma'ida: 119; al-Bayyina: 8; al-Nahl: 31; al-A'raf: 43; also see Yunus: 9; al-'Ankabut: 58; al-Kahf: 31.

55 al-Furqan: 10; al-Zumar: 20.

56 Abu'l-Futuh Razi, *Raud al-jinan*, 292.

dandana). A comparison with the same word within the text proves the difference of hand and style, as shown also by the first syllable *فر* (fig. 14.10) It is written with a brush, not a calligraphic pen (*qalam*) by a painter who did not know calligraphy well. The second point is the letter *ع* in the phrase ‘peace be upon him’, written after Firdausi’s name. Such a style only emerged in the Qajar period and is not seen before that. In addition, the arrangement of graphemes and the design in which the words are composed were not current before the 19th century.

In addition to the calligraphy, the following points also suggest that our image is not a Baysunghuri production. First, its colouring. The pale colours help the image seem spiritual and unearthly, almost like a dream. Nevertheless, even in such undertone colours, they are obviously different from the hues and the quality of pigments used in Baysunghur’s library. The differences between Firdausi’s features and proportions in this illustration and ‘Firdausi and the court poets’ in the Preface of GB, make it clear that the two images do not belong to the same era (fig. 14.11).

Another difference is that the rulings of the text blocks are not identical to those of the painting. The width of the lines in the text columns is the same in all the boxes, but it varies in the outline of the buildings, though the discrepancies are minor. The gold and black used in the illustration outlines are not the



FIGURE 14.10 The word ‘Firdausi’ as seen in the illustration and in the Preface. Malek National Library, ms. 6031; (top) p. 676, (bottom) p. 4.—details of the word.



FIGURE 14.11 *Firdausi's portrait (right) Golestan Palace Library, ms. 716, p. 13; (left) Malek National Library, ms. 6031, p. 676.*

same as for the text blocks: the gold is not as pure and bright and the black hue is darker.

A final but not unimportant point is that no other painting of Firdausi's afterlife has yet been identified. If this illustration dated back to the Timurid era, it would have been a major innovation. A more usual subject would have been 'Firdausi encounters the court poets', of which a few earlier examples exist. The choice of this unconventional scene for illustration remains enigmatic.

The Book Presentation

The illustration on page 677 shows a courtly ceremony for the presentation of this manuscript to Baysunghur Mirza, who is sitting on his royal throne (fig. 14.12). There are fifteen other figures in different positions in the scene, all observing the scribe while he shows the prince the books he has transcribed. A trained eye will recognise the illustration as a forgery. But in response to a number of publications in Iran, in particular, I propose to eliminate any doubt by analyzing the visual elements of the painting.

There are two captions on the illustrations. One is written on the throne to introduce the prince, and the other comes at the bottom of the illustration to introduce and date the event. The name of the prince was spelt Baysunghur in his time, as in the *ex libris* and the colophon of GB. In later times its orthography changed to Baysunqur, and it is still written this way today. On the caption on the top of the throne it is written in the latter form; another indication the

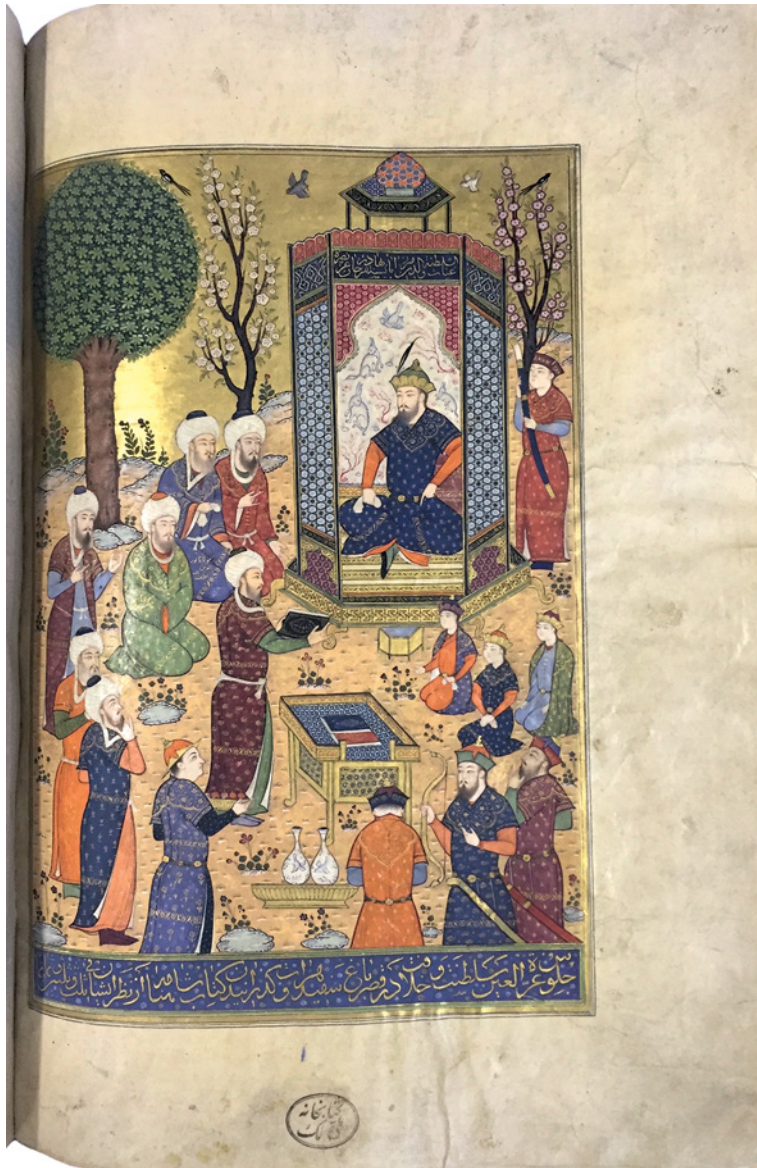


FIGURE 14.12 *The Book presentation. Malek National Library, ms. 6031, p. 677.*

illustration was added at a later time. Also, Abolala Soudavar points out that the title *mirza* (prince) was not in use at the time of Baysunghur, instead the complete form *amir-zada* was the title predominantly used.⁵⁷

It was not uncommon in the Timurid period to illustrate a scene unrelated to the content of the book or to paint a current event. One such example is the frontispiece of GB that depicts a hunting scene in the presence of prince Baysunghur, which does not illustrate a specific narrative of the book. In the case of MB, the reason for choosing to depict a contemporary ceremony is not precisely clear. Perhaps the idea was to pretend it was a current event, and so make the painting seem authentic.

The similarities in portraits, proportions and colour scheme in both illustrations show that they were executed at the same time. For instance, the portraits of Firdausi in the first picture and Khwafi in the second are very similar.

The composition of the presentation scene is similar to the majority of landscapes of the Herat School. But although the illustration is a clever reconstruction of Baysunghuri productions, there are key dissimilarities that prove this painting was not done at the same time as the copying of the book. First, the colour scheme applied in this illustration is completely different from the colours of its peer in the Golestan Palace Library. Not only does the quality of gold diverge significantly from that of GB, but also bright colours in the Golestan manuscript (particularly the ultramarine blue) are different from the dull and flat colours employed in MB. This indicates that the patron (not to mention the budget) were definitely not the same.

Lack of precision in this reproduction of the Herat School paintings can be observed in nearly every aspect, from its overall structure to the intricate details. The ruling of the frame is done with a minimum of precision and differs materially from the precisely executed rulings of GB. It does not even follow the format of the ruling in either the text pages or the illuminated frames of the same manuscript (MB). The outlining of the writing on the bottom inscription, compared with the outlining of inscriptions on the illuminated parts elsewhere, leaves a lot to be desired. As in the previous illustration, the words are not written with a calligraphic pen, but are painted with a brush. Thus the width of the line is not the same throughout.

Several elements of the image are drawn from the illustrations of GB. For example, the representation of Baysunghur seems to be copied from that of Luhrasp on GB page 362, (fig. 14.13) rather than from the frontispiece of GB,

57 Soudavar, *Reassessing early Safavid art*, 86.



FIGURE 14.13 (left) *Luhrasp*. Golestan Palace Library, ms. 716, p. 362 (detail); (right) *Baysunghur*. Malek National Library, ms. 6031, p. 677 (detail).

the hunting scene, which we take to be a portrait of Baysunghur.⁵⁸ As might be expected, the prince is depicted there with an archetypal round face, while in MB it has changed to an oval Khurasani face with a fuller beard.

Looking at the picture, Maulana Lutf-Allah is the second figure on the left side of the throne. He resembles the figure of Munzar on GB page 498 (fig. 14.14).

The position of the sword bearer in the presentation scene is similar to that of the archer in 'Rustam and Isfandiyar testing each other's grip' on GB page 413 (fig. 14.15), as are three other figures in the foreground (figs. 14.16, 14.17, 14.18).

Most of the figures in the 'Book presentation' scene have similar turbans, with a long tail hanging around the neck, all based on the image of Munzar. A closer look at the illustrations of GB shows that this does not seem to be the main fashion at Baysunghur's court, but is confined to Munzar and his companions, who were Arab. Another point is the design of the gowns. In MB, almost everyone has a gown with small decorative motifs covering the whole surface,

⁵⁸ For a list of the paintings containing depictions of the patron, see Lentz, Appendix B, 565–68, though some catalogue numbers he mentions have changed. Also see Hillenbrand, 101.



FIGURE 14.14 (left) Munzar. Golestan Palace Library, ms. 716, p. 498 (detail); (right) Hafiz Abdu, Malek National Library, ms. 6031, p. 677 (detail).

whilst such fabrics are rarely witnessed in GB for the formal gowns. The prince and courtiers of high rank have elegant gowns with bands of golden ornamentation around the shoulders and at the bottom. Fabrics with all-over patterns were either worn under the main formal gown or by the maids and servants. As can be observed on GB page 31, 'Jamshid teaches crafts to the people';⁵⁹ only the tailor and blacksmith who are working and do not have formal gowns appear in fully patterned clothes; the same is seen in the maids' clothes in 'Zal and Rudaba' (GB, p. 62) and in 'Ardashir and Gulnar' (GB, p. 469).

59 See e.g. Blair, "Jamshid invents the crafts", 56, fig. 2.



FIGURE 14.15 *Rostam and Isfandiyar testing each other's grip. Golestan Palace Library, ms. 716, p. 413.*



FIGURE 14.16 Courtiers. (left) Golestan Palace Library, ms. 716, p. 413 (detail); (right) Malek National Library, ms. 6031, p. 677 (detail).

Nonetheless, the most significant difference lies in the structure of the painting. Whereas the compositional features of the Golestan Baysunghuri *Shahnama* are executed in a precise manner, the finispiece illustration of this *Shahnama* can hardly be considered a production of Baysunghur's library. There are a few egregious mistakes in the composition of visual elements. For instance, the blossoming tree on the left is placed above the head of Maulana Darvish Khwafi, merging into his turban, as if the tree is growing from his head. Similarly, the tree on the right appears to extend into the sword of the attendant.

As a final point, in the presentation scene the title of the book, *Shahnama*, offered by its calligrapher, is written horizontally on its cover (fig. 14.19). This was not Timurid practice and suggests that the painting was done at a later time.



FIGURE 14.17 *Courtiers. (left) Golestan Palace Library, ms. 716, p. 413 (detail); (right) Malek National Library, ms. 6031, p. 677 (detail).*



FIGURE 14.18 *Courtiers. (left) Golestan Palace Library, ms. 716, p. 413 (detail); (right) Malek National Library, ms. 6031, p. 677 (detail).*

The Court Personalities at the Presentation

Baysunghur was famous for the gatherings and festive parties to which he invited his favourite poets and artists from his library, as well as selected courtiers. The oft-retold story of Amir Khalil⁶⁰ and how he inadvertently injured the prince conveys the informality of these courtly occasions. One such imagined celebration provides the subject of the *Shahnama's* finispiece. Except for two figures, the names of the entourage are inscribed in gold with a small pen to identify each person (fig. 14.19).⁶¹ Although illustrations with the names of figures on them are common in Mughal painting, that is rarely the case in Baysunghur's library. There is a drawing in a Diez Album with names of figures, but it is just a preliminary sketch, and it is likely that the names would have been painted over.⁶²

It seems on balance probable that the pictures and their labels were done later, to give the scene greater historical verisimilitude. Whoever was responsible must have had a good idea of the personnel at Baysunghur's court, and have been familiar with historical sources for the Timurid era. But whereas a genuine witness of the event depicted would certainly have been able to identify those present accurately, the same might not be true of a later illustrator dependent on historical research. It is essential therefore to establish whether the figures named in the painting were indeed associated with Baysunghur's court at the time of the completion of the manuscript. What follows is a brief account of each character based on historical sources,⁶³ according to their location clockwise from the right. Neglecting the unnamed sword-bearer on the right of the throne, the closest figures to the Prince's throne are his three young sons.

Mirza Abu'l-Qasim Babur, Baysunghur's youngest son, was born on 17 Rajab 825 AH (6 July 1422 AD);⁶⁴ he was thus about 8 years old at the time of the presentation. He later took the throne in Herat in 1449 and ruled till his death in 1457. He was deeply mistrustful of his brothers, and when he first gained power he captured and killed his older brother, Sultan Muhammad Mirza, on the bat-

60 See Thackston, 346.

61 It was not possible to provide a reproduction of all the names, due to reflection from the gold and restrictions caused by the tight binding of the book.

62 Diez A, Fol. 74, S. 24. See Roxburgh, "Heinrich Friedrich von Diez and his eponymous albums", fig. 6 for the drawing and 126–30 for the identifications.

63 An identification and description for the figures are also given by Sharifzadeh, 85–101. Khoddari Naeini, 5, has mentioned only six characters very briefly.

64 Fasih Khwafi, 111, 1102.



FIGURE 14.19 *The names of the entourage. Malek National Library, ms. 6031, p. 677 (detail).*

tlefield of Chinaran. He also ordered the blinding of his other brother 'Ala' al-Daula. He reigned over Fars and Persian Iraq until 1453, when Jahan Shah Qara Quyunlu gained Fars and Kirman. Isfizari describes him as a religious prince, mentioning that at Shaikh Baha' al-Din 'Umar's funeral the prince carried his coffin⁶⁵—no more, in reality, than a sign of respect. Khwandamir makes clear that this prince was very keen on parties and carousing,⁶⁶ and wrote poems on the virtues of drinking.⁶⁷ He was generous and supportive towards his military men, poets and artists.

Mirza Sultan Muhammad (fl. 1418–51), Baysunghur's second son, was well known for his wisdom, patience and moderation as well as his outstanding bravery. Shahrukh wished to appoint Sultan Muhammad as his heir, but his wife Gauharshad disagreed, inferring from his bravery that it was not unlikely he would revolt. Eventually, Shahrukh appointed him governor of Sultaniyya, Qazvin, Nihavand, Ray and Qum, where he ruled for three years. He later raised a revolt and assaulted Isfahan and Fars in 850/1446. Sharaf al-Din 'Ali Yazdi was at his court and, as a wise and knowledgeable man, was expected to advise the prince. But he supported Sultan Muhammad's actions when questioned by Shahrukh. As a result, he and many other leading figures of Isfahan were sentenced to death. Yazdi survived after Prince 'Abd al-Latif interceded for him with Shahrukh, in view of his previous services. In the end Sultan Muhammad's own brother Mirza Abu'l-Qasim Babur mercilessly killed him in 855/1451 at the battle of Chinaran.⁶⁸

Mirza Rukn al-Din 'Ala' al-Daula was Baysunghur's oldest son, born on 1 Jumada al-awwal 820 (16 June 1417).⁶⁹ He was thus aged 13 at the time of the presentation. He was different from his two brothers in manner and appearance. 'Ala' al-Daula was not a man of war or politics, but was inclined to spend his time in pleasure and carousal, drinking pure red wine and listening to the music of *daf* and harp players.⁷⁰ His wine cellar (*khum-khana*) was notorious, and as soon as Shahrukh was informed of its existence he had all the alcoholic drinks destroyed under his own supervision.⁷¹ Like most Timurid royal family members, he was a poet too. 'Ala' al-Daula was Gauharshad's favourite grandson,

65 Isfizari, *Raudat al-jannat*, II, 175.

66 Khwandamir, IV, 22.

67 One of them can be found in Daulatshah, 433.

68 For Mirza Sultan Muhammad, see Khwandamir, IV, 39–41, and 44–46 for his death.

69 Hafiz Abru, *Majma' al-tavarikh* (*Zubdat al-tavarikh*), IV, 645.

70 Khwandamir, IV, 19–28.

71 Khwandamir, III, 17.

whereas his brothers were just two names to her.⁷² After Baysunghur's death, Shahrukh made him ruler of Herat.⁷³ He also inherited his father's royal library and continued the patronage of artists and poets as before. Soon after Shahrukh died, he lavished treasures upon his army. However, Ulugh Beg's assault in 852/1448 ended his brief rule of Herat. He finally died in 865/1460.⁷⁴

Shir Muhammad Ughlan was the son of Muhammad Khan who reigned over parts of Mongolia. After his father's death, Shir Muhammad became khan and ruled Jatta independently.⁷⁵ In 828/1425, he invaded the lands of Ulugh Beg, so the prince asked Shahrukh for permission to go to Mongolia and repress his mutiny. He defeated Shir Muhammad in a great battle and returned to Samarqand victorious.⁷⁶ Whether Shir Muhammad remained in the service of Baysunghur in 833/1430 (the date given on the painting) is not known.

Amir Muhammad Barlas. According to Dughlat, Mir Muhammad Barandug Barlas was a high ranking officer (*amir*) at Shahrukh's court.⁷⁷ He was known as 'Shuja' al-Din' and served in Sultan Husain's army, becoming *amir al-umara* (senior commander) after a year of imprisonment in Ikhtiyar al-Din's castle.⁷⁸

Amir Muzaffar Tarkhan. The only person of this name I have been able to trace in the historical sources is Amir Muzaffar Barlas, who was apparently an important figure and was involved in several events. Barlas was the name of one of the four important Chagatay tribes from which Timur's father originated. Tarkhan, a Turkic word, was a title for those exempted from paying taxes and who could meet the king without seeking permission or an appointment. It is possible that Amir Muzaffar Barlas was the same person, but the first time he appears in the sources is in 865/1461, when during the siege of Herat Amir Muzaffar Barlas was sent to Ab-i Murghab by Sultan Husain Bayqara to investigate the situation.⁷⁹ He later became an important figure in his court,⁸⁰ but this was almost 30 years after the creation of MB.

The servant is not named.

72 Daulatshah, 405.

73 Khwandamir, III, 623.

74 Daulatshah, 312–14.

75 Dughlat, *Tarikh-i Rashidi*, 86–87.

76 Fasih Khwafi, III, 1097, 1111; for the war between them, see Vala Isfahani, *Khuld-i barin*, 499–500.

77 Dughlat, 361.

78 Khwandamir, IV, 166–67.

79 Khwandamir, III, 126.

80 Ibid., 159. When Sultan Husain appointed 'Alishir as amir, he commanded that only Amir Muzaffar had the right to sign a document above him.

Khawaja Maulana Mu'in al-Din. It is not likely that this figure is meant to represent the famous Mu'in al-Din Kashani who served Ulugh Beg at the observatory in Samarqand in 823/1420. It is more likely to be the historian Mu'in al-Din Natanzi, the author of *Muntakhab al-tawarikh Mu'ini* (completed in 816/1413), who joined Shahrukh's court after Sultan Iskandar's death. He revised and dedicated his book to Shahrukh in 817/1414.⁸¹

Maulana Jalal al-Din 'Abd al-Rahim Sadr served as *sadr* (religious head) under Baysunghur Mirza and 'Ala' al-Daula.⁸² He died in 849/1445.

Maulana Amir Muhammad Darvish Darugha was the sheriff (*darugha*) of Herat and also served in Amiranshah's army. He was sent to besiege Alanjaq castle in Georgia in 803/1400, along with Amir Firuzshah from Shahrukh's army.⁸³ They took the castle after a ten-year siege, and arrested the castellan.⁸⁴ In 836/1432 Amir Muhammad Darvish died and his son, Amir Sultan Abu Sa'id, inherited his father's position.⁸⁵

Maulana Amir Qasim Anvar, Sayyid Qasim Tabrizi known as Anvar, was one of the best-known *sufis* of the 9th/15th century. Due to his fame and the large number of followers he gained in Herat, Shahrukh was always wary of him. So when in 830/1427 a certain Ahmad Lur tried unsuccessfully to assassinate Shahrukh, it was a good pretext to execute or exile many sufis, among whom was Sayyid Qasim Anvar.⁸⁶ He was one of the pioneers of writing poetry in Chaghatay Turkish.⁸⁷ He died in 837/1433 in Khargird in Khurasan.⁸⁸ As he was exiled in 830/1427 he could not have been present at the ceremony at court.

Maulana Nur al-Din Lutf-Allah or Hafiz Abru customarily referred to himself as 'Abd Allah ibn Lutf-Allah ibn 'Abd al-Rashid. 'Abd al-Razzaq refers to him as Khwaja Nur al-Din Lutf-Allah known as Hafiz Abru.⁸⁹ He was born in Azarbaijan and died in Zanzan in 834/1431.⁹⁰ He was the author of *Jughrafiya*

81 Vala Isfahani, 495. Aigle, "Mo'in-al-din Natanzi".

82 Khwandamir, IV, 16; Manz, *Power, politics and religion in Timurid Iran*, 213–14.

83 Fasih Khwafi, III, 1006.

84 'Abd al-Razzaq Samarqandi, *Matla' i Sa'dain*, I/2, 875; Khwandamir, III, 499.

85 Fasih Khwafi, III, 1126, nn. 14, 15.

86 Fasih Khwafi, II, 86.

87 Khwandamir, III, 617, IV, 10–11.

88 For more information about his life and shrine, see Daulatshah, 346–52, 'Alishir Nava'i, *Majalis al-nafa'is*, 183–84. For his tendency to the Hurufi doctrine, see Safa, *Tarikh-i adabiyyat dar Iran*, IV, 252–64; and for a thorough investigation of the attempt on Shahrukh, see Binbaş, "The anatomy of a regicide attempt", 1–38, esp. 13–15.

89 Samarqandi, I/2, 676.

90 Fasih Khwafi, III, 1119, stated the year of his death as 833/1430, whereas Samarqandi recorded it as 834/1431, which was later adopted by Khwandamir, IV, 8.

and *Majmaʿ al-tavarikh al-sultani* in 4 volumes. The last volume was dedicated to Prince Baysunghur, entitled *Zubdat al-tavarikh-i Baysunghuri*, completed in 830/1427.⁹¹

Maulana Vazir Khwafi or Fasih Khwafi served under Shahrukh and Baysunghur from 818/1415 to 836/1432, before being dismissed by Baysunghur and imprisoned until 845/1441. He was the author of *Mujmal-i Fasihi*, a chronological history that relates important events in a terse style.⁹² He is located on the prince's right, and this suggests very strongly that it is indeed Fasih, who achieved the highest office in the central diwan for a period.⁹³

Muhammad ibn Mutahhar Nishaburi Katib, in the centre of the image, is the scribe offering the *Shahnama* to the prince, while there are two more books on the table in front of him. As already noted, he was one of the calligraphers in the royal library of Baysunghur. Interestingly, his name differs from the way he spelt it in the colophon, now Nishaburi rather than Nisaburi.

Examining, in this way, all the characters who appear in the presentation scene shows that not all of those who have been firmly identified were part of Baysunghur's court at the time the book was finished, even though they do feature in the history of the period. Therefore, it can be tentatively concluded that whoever commissioned the two illustrations was familiar with the historical context and figures of the Timurid period and had researched Baysunghur's court well, but was not entirely accurate in his reconstruction of it.⁹⁴

Discussion

Being inspired by or simply copying from the illustrations of previous books was a tradition in Persian painting.⁹⁵ The images of the Golestan copy (GB) are indebted to both former Baysunghuri productions and earlier schools, mainly the Jalayirids, and the sources of some of its images and pictorial elements

91 Subtleny & Melville, "Hāfez-e Abru", 507–9.

92 Safa, IV, 494–96.

93 See Manz, esp. 64–67.

94 Soudavar, *Reassessing early Safavid art*, 87, discusses the probable forgers of the illustrations of MB. More on this is found in *The Cambridge history of Iran*, VII, 888–89.

"The Imami family, in particular, seems to have specialized in covering the blank pages of 15th- and 16th-century manuscripts with miniatures in what they imagined was the style of the time, the designs being not infrequently copied from the reproductions of Persian miniatures in European publications." Also see Ghiasian, "The historical style", 892.

95 For a formative discussion of the practice of copying earlier paintings in the Timurid period, see A. Adamova, "Repetition of compositions in manuscripts", esp. 72–74.

are known.⁹⁶ Comparison of the illustrations of the two manuscripts suggests very strongly that the painter of MB had access to GB. This in turn suggests two possibilities: either both manuscripts were owned by the same person and the illustrations were added before their separation; or, alternatively, the illustrations are modern forgeries added after Farhad Mirza's library was scattered and before our manuscript (MB) was acquired by the Malek Museum. The lack of accuracy in execution of the two illustrations argues in favour of the second possibility, but until pigments are tested, there can be no certainty, especially concerning the originality of the *ex libris*. There were skillful bookbinders and conservators working for different museums who could easily gain access to manuscripts to aid them when making forgeries. It is worthwhile, therefore, to pursue also the question of the joint ownership of the two mss.

There is a general belief that the Baysunghuri *Shahnama* (GB) was owned by Amir Nizam Hasan 'Ali Khan Garrusi (1820–1900),⁹⁷ before it entered the Golestan Library.⁹⁸ Garrusi was an influential political figure, contemporaneous with Farhad Mirza (1818–1888) and according to the *Munsha'at* (Letters) of Garrusi⁹⁹ and of Farhad Mirza¹⁰⁰ they corresponded and Garrusi sent the latter presents on occasion.¹⁰¹ He participated in two campaigns against Herat in 1837 and 1855. On the first mission in 1837, Muhammad Shah set off to capture Herat and left Farhad Mirza in charge of the capital, Tehran, while Amir Nizam Garrusi participated in the siege together with Muhammad Shah. On the second occasion, he was in Herat along with Husam al-Saltana (Sultan Murad Mirza) when the city was captured. Garrusi was made responsible for

96 Thomas Lentz discusses the sources of the images of GB in his unpublished dissertation. See Chapter 2, esp. 103–8.

97 Amanat, "Amir Nizam Garrusi", 966–69.

98 It is very likely that this belief originated from Bayani's incomplete catalogue of the Golestan Palace Library, where the author deduced that the manuscript was owned by Hasan 'Ali Garrusi and probably he endowed it to the Palace. Seemingly, no one has yet questioned the ascription of the seals of GB's manuscript, one of which bears the inscription: *'abduhu al-raji Hasan 'Ali*. Bayani, *Fihrist-i natamam*, 1–6. I am thankful to Ms. Manijeh Bayani for facilitating my access to this valuable book.

99 Amir Nizam Garrusi, *Munsha'at*, 1334/1916, Tehran, National Library, lithograph, no. 9374; scribe: Ahmad Basirat. The book contains a collection of Garrusi's courtly, personal and official letters, including those he exchanged with Farhad Mirza.

100 Farhad Mirza, *Munsha'at*, 119–25. His letters were collected and published by Garrusi. See Navvab Safa, 232.

101 As attested by the *Munsha'ats*, the two had opposing points of view and Garrusi used to interfere constantly in the policies of Farhad Mirza in Garrus (Kurdistan). An abstract of their main issues over Garrus can be found in Behzadi, "Munsha'at-i Farhad Mirza", 42.

the protection of Herat, but resided there for less than a year.¹⁰² He was also assigned the Tabriz garrison from 1838 to 1841.¹⁰³ For fourteen months in 1871–72 he served as ambassador to the Ottoman Porte. This means that he was personally present at all the possible locations that Baysunghuri manuscripts had ended up at some point: Herat, Tabriz, Istanbul and Tehran.

It is very likely that GB and MB remained together until a certain time; however, the fate of the manuscripts and the place and time at which they were purchased and probably brought back to Tehran remain obscure. They were produced in Herat and then presumably moved to Tabriz along with other precious artworks from Baysunghur's library, after the fall of Herat. Most of them were taken as booty during the sackings of Tabriz by the Ottomans, while some stayed at the Safavid court for a longer time.

One of the surviving Baysunghuri codices is an album of seven scripts assembled for the prince (H. 2310, Topkapı Palace Library, Istanbul), which as Roxburgh demonstrates was at the Safavid court before eventually being taken to Istanbul.¹⁰⁴ Since the current binding of GB almost certainly dates back to the Safavid period, the same story could be conjectured for these two Baysunghuri manuscripts (GB & MB), but it is not definitively known whether or not they (or perhaps only GB) ended up in Istanbul.¹⁰⁵ Still, since no Ottoman seal is found anywhere in either of the two codices, and bearing in mind the strong inclination and long term tradition of the Ottomans to leave notes and seals of possession on manuscripts, it seems very unlikely that either GB or MB ever found its way to Istanbul.

It is plausible that the bibliophile Garrusi might have owned GB. He commissioned several books, such as the *Divan* of Farrukhi Sistani dated 1304/1887, in *shikasta-nasta'liq* script and adorned with three exquisite inscriptions, with every page decorated with lapis lazuli and gold.¹⁰⁶ He was the patron of various lithograph publications such as the *Kalila va Dimna* published in the same year.¹⁰⁷ He was not only an author and a poet, but also an excellent calligrapher, as shown by the silver door of the *Tauhid-khana* Razavi in Mashhad, which is adorned with Qur'anic verses in his hand. Most of the books from his library include his notes and seals with an inscription of his name. One example is ms. Per. 163, Chester Beatty Library, which exhibits Garrusi's seal

102 Fattahi, *Safar-nama-yi Mirza Fattah*, 1165.

103 Amanat, 966.

104 Roxburgh, "Catalogue of scripts by the seven masters", 589.

105 I discuss the fate of GB in my PhD thesis in detail.

106 Muhammadi, *Tarikh-i Takab-i Afshar*, 255–56.

107 Afshar, *Guzarish-ha va nama-ha-yi divani-i Amir Nizam Garrusi*, 12.

as 'Amir Nizam 1302' as well as his note on the first folio.¹⁰⁸ Four other seals of Hasan 'Ali Garrusi are reproduced in the *Encyclopedia of seals and engravings in Iran*. However, none of them look similar to the seal appearing on folio 2r of GB.¹⁰⁹ Not only is the inscription on GB's seal different, but also its date (1323 AH) is five years after Garrusi's death in 1317.¹¹⁰ This means that despite the coincidence of names, Hasan 'Ali, the seal belonged to someone other than Garrusi, which in turn suggests that the previous owner of GB is not decisively known. Thus the possible exchanges between Garrusi and Farhad Mirza have no bearing on the immediate question.

While it remains possible that GB and MB were together in Farhad Mirza's time, the speculation that the illustrations were added to the manuscript (MB) during the Qajar period does not seem robust, judging by the level of mastery of their execution. The spelling mistakes, the poor structure and the quality of pigments and execution, are all good reasons to consider the two paintings modern forgeries.¹¹¹ But in the 1933 catalogue of the Burlington House exhibition, a manuscript in a private collection in Tehran is described as containing portraits of the writer, gilder and artist, as well as Baysunghur, to whom they present it. The description fits MB, even if the completion year is mistakenly given as 831. Since no other manuscript matches this description, 1933 could serve as a *terminus ante quem* for the paintings of MB.¹¹²

Conclusion

This article has examined the Malek Library copy of Prince Baysunghur's edition of the *Shahnama* (co-bound with the *Khamisa* of Nizami), partly by comparing it with the more famous and lavishly illustrated copy in the Golestan Palace Library (GB); both manuscripts were completed in the same year, 833/1430, in Herat.

Many features of MB, its calligraphy, illumination and layout, are sufficiently similar to those of GB to confirm that it is an original production of Baysunghur's atelier, a conclusion supported by the apparent mention of both manuscripts in Ja'far Tabrizi's *Arza-dasht*. As suspected by some previous scholars, however, the two paintings in MB cannot have been created at the same time. The

108 <http://www.cbl.ie/islamicseals/View-Seals/261.aspx> (last accessed 17 September, 2017).

109 Jeddi, *Danishnama-yi muhr va hakkaki dar Iran*, 440–41.

110 See n. 97.

111 On modern forgeries, see Shreve Simpson, "Mostly modern miniatures", 359–95, esp. 387–88 and her literature on forgeries on 395, n. 78.

112 Binyon, Wilkinson & Gray, *Persian miniature painting*, 69.

arguments for this conclusion have been presented here in more detail than in previous studies, where the pictures (and also the manuscript) have usually been dismissed without much comment. Although it has not been possible to prove the exact time at which the two paintings were added to the manuscript, it has been argued from circumstantial evidence that the pictures were most likely added in the early 20th century after Farhad Mirza's collection was dispersed and before MB was acquired by Hajj Hussain Malek the founder of the Malek National Library and Museum. The existence of the two pictures in the manuscript was reported in the Burlington House catalogue in 1933.

The binding was almost certainly commissioned in the second half of the 19th century by Farhad Mirza, whose note on the first flyleaf contains the date Jumada al-awwal, 1296/February 1879. This suggests that the princely figure depicted in the painting on the doublure of Rustam and Isfandiyar might be taken to represent Farhad Mirza.

Despite the modern insertions, the Malek copy remains an important witness to the production of the *Shahnama* in Baysunghur's atelier. Its existence raises more general questions about the parallel creation of illustrated and non-illustrated copies of particular works, and the textual relationship between them, questions which cannot be addressed here.

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